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F. B. Meyer

PREACHER, TEACHER,
MAN OF GOD

WORKS BY
A. CHESTER MANN

F. B. MEYER

Preacher, Teacher, Man of God

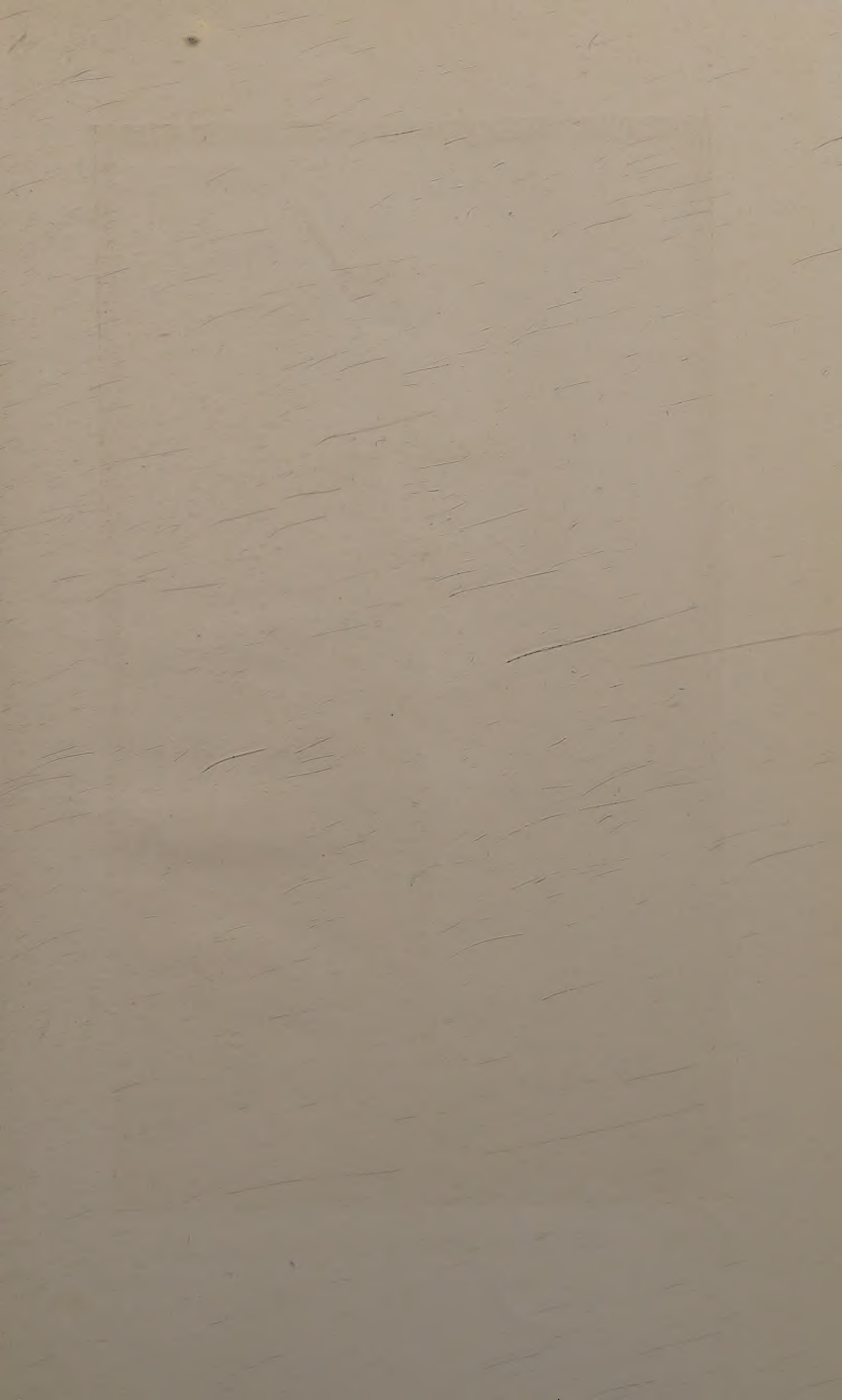
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FREDERICK BROTHERTON MEYER, B.A., D.D.

F. B. Meyer

PREACHER, TEACHER,
MAN OF GOD

By
A. CHESTER MANN

INTRODUCTION BY
F. A. ROBINSON, M.A.

*Missions of Biblical Education,
Toronto, Canada*



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*To W. H. W.,
My Friend and Fellow-Labourer.*

INTRODUCTION

THE people were crowding through the vestibule of a far Western church. I was seeking to make my way a little more quickly than the others, but was delayed by two elderly folks. "Let's get near the front," said one, "it does you good to see him sitting on the platform, even when he isn't saying anything."

The words referred to Dr. F. B. Meyer, and multitudes could have been found to agree with them. Every platform on which Dr. Meyer stood or sat seemed to become a radiating centre, from which blessing flowed. To look at that cultured kindly face, illumined by the gentleness and goodness and strength of a great heart, was to most people a preparation for worship.

For many months on different occasions I journeyed thousands of miles with him, and the aged preacher was eager for every possible engagement. It was exceedingly difficult to keep him within the limits of physical endurance, the limits in his case being far beyond those of the average man. This volume will tell something of his marvellous capacity for work, a capacity that continued over fourscore years and to within a few days of the end.

His faith and life were strongly and beautifully simple. Day by day, one saw how real was his dependence on God. Hundreds of times I have heard him utter

his favourite phrase, "Reckon on God." When the load, which he cheerfully and persistently assumed, grew almost too heavy, he drew nearer to his Father. In his eightieth year, and during a very strenuous period of engagements, none of which he wished cancelled, he became a little anxious as to whether he really had undertaken too much. In that particular three months' tour, always of two and, sometimes, of three or four meetings daily, not one service had to be cancelled. Nearly eight thousand miles were covered in those twelve weeks.

While he was gladly welcomed to every pulpit, there were places visited where college professors or ministers would tell us frankly that, to their way of thinking, Dr. Meyer's theology was a little out of date; but no matter how wide might be theological differences, none ever doubted his absolute devotion to His Lord nor the amazingly good influence of his life. He was a living demonstration of the glorious Gospel he preached, which, rather than being out of date, is what the world needs above all else. He brought honour to the cause he represented, and in public and private, "adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

It was no false modesty that made him express his wonder at what God had done through him, and so he was ever seeking young life for Christ. He would often say something akin to this: "If the talk, tonight, lead young men and women to make a bolt upstairs into their bedrooms and kneel before Christ and say: 'From this night, I enter into partnership with Thee; I want to carry out Thy purpose and plan,' it will be

worth my while to have crossed the Atlantic." And one who was privileged to join him in quiet prayer before retiring, knew that the words told of the deepest longing of his soul.

One cannot recall these journeyings without thinking of his unfailing courtesy. When tired, as he often was, it was not easy to be patient with people who insisted on asking all sorts of unreasonable questions. Perhaps his sense of humour often saved the situation. Frequently, in the long line of those desiring a handshake at the close of a service, there would be those who insisted that he surely must remember shaking hands with them after his sermon on Elijah in Victoria Road Church, Leicester, in 1880, or on the steps of St. Andrew's Hall the first night of Glasgow Fair, when he spoke to young people, or on Sabbath morning, at Northfield, thirty years ago!

I remember how humorously perplexed he was one night when a woman detained him altogether too long, seeking to convince him that he remembered being vaccinated at the same time as she! As we walked away he said, with that whimsical tone and smile that delighted his friends, "My dear brother, I hope the recording angel will drop a tear and blot out the wrong; for, in the end, I'm afraid that woman made me almost nod an assent; and I don't remember a thing about my own vaccination, let alone hers, but she was bent on making me say I did. I'm afraid she'll go home, and say I remembered!"

On the very day he was to have started for his tour of Canada and the United States, he departed to be

with Christ, which, as he would have said with a smile of faith, "is far better." And so, instead of welcoming him, we have had to say farewell. And yet he seemed to come strangely near when cables told of his departure. What blessed memories were recalled and revived!

He died in England, but there, as in America and other lands, he still lives. In this Dominion which I know so well, I can truly see the harvests of the good seed he incessantly sowed. In rural community and village, in town and city, from Atlantic to Pacific are men and women who got a fresh grip on the things that abide and were led into a deeper communion because this man of God tarried with them.

And so any further word that can throw additional light on the life of Dr. F. B. Meyer, is to be welcomed. Multitudes whom he helped, were able only to listen to his pulpit utterances and see the revered preacher from a distance. A nearer view and a more intimate acquaintance with this good and gentle man, who, as occasion demanded, could be ablaze with righteous indignation and fearlessly fight, will enrich the memories of his spoken message.

And I am quite sure that his one desire would be that any printed page going forth from the kindly pen of any friend of his, should cause readers to think not so much of F. B. Meyer, but of the Saviour Who redeemed him and worked through him.

F. A. ROBINSON.

*Missions of Biblical Education,
Toronto, Canada.*

PREFATORY NOTE

THIS narrative aspires to no biographical excellence, nor makes any pretension to having attained the status of an exhaustive *Life*. It is simply part of the public record of the public life of a great public servant who, for more than sixty years, lived his life in the immediate public eye. With hitherto unpublished letters and documents of like nature, it has nothing to do. Those desiring access to data of this description will, of necessity, have to turn elsewhere. Moreover; save for its embodiment of certain glimpses of Dr. Meyer's private life, which he, himself, chose to reveal in his own pages, it leaves the province of his personal intimacies uninvaded.

During some four or five weeks following the date of Dr. Meyer's death, all the hours conservable from the claim of current duties, were devoted to the task of collecting this material from the columns of newspapers, magazines and other publications, contemporary with the events recorded, Dr. Meyer's own books, and my own personal files. The facts thus assembled were amplified by the inclusion of many personal recollections and impressions, which cover a period of more than thirty years.

A. C. M.

New York, N. Y.

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Not self nor self-salvation was his care;

*He yearned to make the earth a sunnier clime
To live in; and his mission, everywhere,*

Was strangely like the Christ's in olden time.

—SIR RICHARD BURTON.

*Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a
shock of corn cometh in, in his season.*

—BOOK OF JOB 5:26.

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I

A KEY TO A CHARACTER

THE subject of these pages passed to his rest, March 28, 1929. Two days later, *The Daily Telegraph* (London) duly noted the untoward event by printing an obituary notice, in which the following sentences found place:

It was Meyer's lot to toil through half a century, when to be a Nonconformist was to be militant or nothing, and to launch a maximum of eloquence for a minimum of effect. All this was as foreign and remote from Meyer's nature, as excursions into abstract philosophy or metaphysics.

Concerning this same paragraph much could be written in rebuttal. One fact, in especial, it proceeds to render perfectly obvious to all those sufficiently informed to judge of its accuracy, namely, that the writer of it could not possibly have known Dr. Meyer very well, if, indeed, he knew him at all. Otherwise one scarcely sees how he could have been betrayed into harbouring the error to which his sentences give expression. Had he known F. B. Meyer better, he would have known, also, that this man so interpreted the principles of lawful dissent, and so considered his own relation thereto, that, to a veritable certainty, he would have been a militant Nonconform-

ist, in *any* age, or in *any* clime. He would have realized, moreover, that, although Meyer was not the sort of man who moved around among his fellows spoiling for a scrap, or seeking pretexts for a quarrel, yet he was, nevertheless, a born fighter. Being armed with what Kit Marlowe calls that which is more than complete steel—the justice of his quarrel—he proceeded to comport himself with such ardour, as to give those opposing him, a very definite and vivid realization that they were confronted by a foeman who neither gave quarter, nor asked for any, and to whom the thought of quitting was as alien as that of the betrayal of his country, or the foreswearing of his sovereign lord the King.

Possessed of a flawless courage, the master of an inflexible will, having a practical and level mind in mundane affairs, Meyer addressed himself to every enterprise, under immediate consideration, with a zest and an abandon possible only to the man who, in the heart's core of him, is "a man of his hands." His gentleness was an innocent foil, an unintentional yet genuinely deceptive thing. Time and again, it trapped men into underestimating the strength of character it so securely veiled. But it made Meyer great in many ways, not least as an intrepid fighter. Athos, it will be recalled, was the calmest, the most reserved of Dumas' redoubtable Musketeers. Yet his blade leaped as swiftly from its scabbard, as did that of the boisterous Porthos; it was as well-timed and deadly in its thrust, as that of the fiery D'Artagnan. Similarly, Meyer, chivalrous, quiet-

mannered, courteous, was, withal, a doughty warrior, and to be up and at it, was no more "foreign or remote from Meyer's nature," than the process of leading a great, devotional assembly to the throne of heavenly grace.

The greater forces of nature are the silent ones. One may hear the screaming of a typhoon through the rigging of a four-masted schooner and the thunder of angry seas breaking over her hatches, but not a soul hears the moon hauling the Atlantic Ocean into the North Sea. The roar of a forest fire is an appalling, awe-inspiring sound, but human nature is altogether too gross to hear the rising of the sap in four continents, clothing a world in greenery, with each successive spring. Meyer was never blatant, often he was silent; but he was intense, at times, white-hot, and, for more than half a century, furnished his contemporaries with an unfailing reminder that enthusiasm and downrightness are the driving forces of the world. Lofty indifference—the hall mark of the mental snob or parasite, which saps the life of human effort like a maggot at a tree-root—was never his; and every increase of noble enthusiasm in his living spirit was marked and measured and given expression by the concrete work of his hands.

I have given prominence to the stronger, more militant side of Meyer's character, and have come to a consideration of it thus early in these pages, simply because (as I see it) unless it be kept continuously in view, one looks in vain for an explanation of his many-

sided and wonderful career. At the time of the Berlin Congress, Bismarck declared, contemptuously, that Lord Salisbury was a piece of wood, painted to look like iron. Conversely, Meyer was a man of iron, whose gentle exterior lent colour to the quite erroneous impression that he was made of the softer material.

His sweetness of disposition [wrote Dr. J. H. Shakespeare of him, in 1907] is united with an almost autocratic temper when he has definitely decided on the right path. He cannot be easily turned aside, and if there are defections he is quite prepared to go on alone.

His influence, cast wholly on the side of truth and righteousness, may, without any exaggeration, be described as having belted the globe. During the entire period covered by the lifetime of the present generation, this man of gentle spirit and consecrated life furnished tens of thousands of people in all parts of the world with an incentive to individual devotion and the attainment of a lofty conception of Christian profession and responsibility, such as few men of our time have been permitted to exercise. It is only when one views, with something akin to despair, how much well-intentioned, even strenuous, effort ends in sheer futility, that he realizes something of the value attaching itself to the effective, altogether enviable and, in some respects, truly wonderful work, Meyer was enabled to accomplish. He was a true mystic and saw far into the deeps of spiritual things. Wordsworth sings of "the harvest of a quiet eye." Meyer's was

the harvest of a quiet heart. His own soul abode in quietness and confidence, and from his spiritual habitation of security and peace, he taught men everywhere how to stand still and see the salvation of God; to wait patiently on the Lord; to trust and not be afraid.

Concerning his spirituality, his sincerity, his innate goodness, none were ever in doubt. "What a good man Walrond is!" said Professor Sellar to Matthew Arnold, on one occasion. "Ah!" replied Arnold, "we were *all* so good at Rugby." "Yes, I know," retorted Sellar, "but, then, Walrond *kept it up*." Like Walrond, Meyer kept it up, and as one thinks of him, he thinks, also, of one of Clarendon's famous portraits—one in which he depicts a high-souled, chivalrous cavalier, "of inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of a glowing and obliging humanity, and of a primitive simplicity and integrity of life." Clarendon was writing of Lord Falkland. He described F. B. Meyer. Dr. Joseph Parker declared that he always brought a benediction with him and quite often referred to him as "my father confessor."

Yet this eminent man of God realized—none ever came to know it more completely—that the crown of all true wisdom is service. The windows of his soul doubtless looked out upon the infinite; but the distant light was never permitted to blind him to the thousand and one duties which lay just outside his door. "In every piece of honest work," he once said, "however irksome, laborious and commonplace, we are fellow-workers with God." His crowded life was one of

prayer and action, ecstasy and service, lonely hours with God, crowded hours with men. During the night he communes with God on lonely mountain-tops, so to speak, and how radiantly beautiful he is, as the light of heaven shines from his eyes and face! The morning finds him going about among the people as the good man, helping, advising, healing, providing for the poor. His words were blessed, often mystical, stirring strange emotions in the heart; at the same time his deeds were the most practical conceivable. He went up into the Mount to meet God, and came straight down to cast out devils from the hearts and habitations of men. He made a rich bequest to the world, and it is not possible to place an adequate appraisalment on the legacy.

We live in uncertain days—days when a believer's faith often is rudely shaken, when darkness dims the clearer vision. At such a time, in such an hour, it is not easy to underestimate the value to the harried spirit and questioning heart of the quiet, assuring, triumphant message, furnished by the life and work of F. B. Meyer. His was a soul in undoubted communion with the Source of all spiritual power, and as he went about the world, labouring for God and loving men into the kingdom, those about him, learned from their observation of him something of the perfect ways of Christian chivalry, and beheld the treasure of the Highest, enshrined in an earthen vessel. As he grew older in body he grew younger in spirit and gave, to all who glanced his way, an example of how to grow older gracefully and to accept with dignity and serenity, the increasing burden of the years. For many

years past, he was affectionately known to his intimates as "F. B.," and to the outside world as the Admirable Crichton of Nonconformity. When the end came, *The Telegraph* described it as being "the death of the Archbishop of the Free Churches." He passed from the things of time and sense in the eighty-second year of his age; he lived, almost to his very last day; and life, for Dr. Meyer, meant movement, activity, self-expression, service.

His physical presence is now removed. But that is all. He still lives—lives in triplicate: in the mansions of the Eternal Father—the bosom of God who is Love incarnate, where (to use a phrase of his own) "we shall find all of sweetness, and purity, and truth, we have ever known;" in the hosts of men and women who were won for God by his pleadings and ministered to by his remarkable insight and power of mystical interpretation, and in the manifold ministries of help and healing he set in motion, which brought cheer to the despairing mind, solace to the smitten spirit, balm to the wounded heart. He has bequeathed to the world, not a machine but a spirit; not a program but a life; and as the days go by, he will be remembered as one of the great religious figures of his time.

If, from some exalted place and with an all-seeing eye, we could look abroad over the world and into the hearts of men [said *The British Weekly*] we should probably find that the passing away of Dr. F. B. Meyer had produced a more unanimous feeling of affection and of indebtedness than would accompany the announcement of the

death of any living man. This may appear to be a large claim; but we believe it could be shown to be quite credible and capable of the fullest substantiation.

Of this fact, I feel unassailably sure: Men will continue to steer their way by his compass, nourish their belief in the Highest by sharing his ideals and emulating his spirit, stimulate their growth in grace by the processes he indicated, and continue in good works by the sheer infection of his steadfastness. Longest of all, I think, he will be recalled as a great and fearless champion of the weak, the sinned-against and the fallen. Meyer was a Christian crusader, *par excellence*. Wherever wrongs required to be redressed, slighted causes to be considered, or where entrenched and embattled evil scornfully defied attack, there, too, was F. B. Meyer. "Dauntless the slug-horn to his lips he set, and blew," intrepidly challenging whatever of sinful prowess lay hidden behind the frowning walls of the darkened tower. In this guise—grave and gentle yet venturously valiant—F. B. Meyer will be regarded and remembered, by generations yet unborn.

*God save his pennon, stark against the dawn,
That signed for moons to stand and suns to fly;
That fluttered when the weak were overborne,
To stem the tide of fate and certainty;
That knew not reason and that sought no fame,
But had engraved about its rugged wood,
The words: "Knight-Errant till Eternity."*

II

THE BENDING OF THE TWIG

FREDERICK BROTHERTON MEYER was born at Lavender Terrace, Wandsworth Road, London, April 8, 1847. His paternal grandfather, a wealthy city of London merchant, was of German origin. His father married into a noted Quaker family, his mother being one of ten children born to Henry and Anne Sturt, who were closely identified with the many philanthropic enterprises in which the Friends of that day benevolently engaged.

Thus was young Meyer well and worthily born. Of course, all of us are aware that birth and ancestry—something we, ourselves, did not achieve—can scarcely be cited as meritorious achievement; that mere family never made a man great, or notable even; that deeds, not pedigrees, are the passports to enduring fame. Yet, good birth is a thing one seldom hears disparaged, except by those who cannot claim it, and there is a quite important sense in which a proper moral and philosophical respect for ancestry elevates the character and improves the heart. Lord Macaulay declared that people who took no pride in the achievements of their ancestors were, more than likely, destined to accomplish nothing worthy of being remembered by their descendants. And, of course, there is Oliver Wendell Holmes, who, in his quaint

way, remarks: "Other things being equal, give me the man with a grandfather." In these regards, few, if any of the religious leaders of his time, had a richer patrimony than F. B. Meyer, and he gratefully acknowledged his indebtedness, to the end of his days.

The environment of Meyer's early days was of the happiest, carefree sort. In after years, he recalled it as being as sunny as possible—a stretch of sunlit years untouched by shadow, towards which he turned as one might into a quiet picture gallery for refreshment and beguilement. There were long summer days, spent on Clapham Common, the gorse covering it from side to side, and the bracken growing high enough to hide his slight, childish figure that delighted to throw itself in wild abandonment into its midst. There were halcyon days of almost interminable length—so it seemed to his childish fancy—spent in sailing boats across mimic seas, or engaging in games of cricket, as exciting as any that ever drew throngs to Kennington Oval or Lord's, to watch the historic struggles between England and Australia. Then there were long drives through Streatham and Dulwich, in a day when those suburbs of London were uninvaded by the modern terrace or the intersecting railroads. There was the deep shade of the spreading chestnuts, his father's home with its long garden and paddock, and, more treasured in his memory than aught else, the house at the end of Long Walk, on Clapham Common, in which his maternal grandparents resided, and in which Lord Macaulay wrote his *History of England*.

Henry Sturt, his grandfather on the distaff side of

the house, was a native of Hassocks, in Sussex. He came to London while yet a boy, and early exhibited unusual business promise, which duly ripened into marked commercial capacity and organizing ability. By steady application, he gradually rose to be the head of the noted Wood Street house of Sturt and Sharp. A strong man who knew his own mind, he created for himself a position of wide influence and honour, in the business world of the British capital.

The maiden name of his grandmother was Anne Barnard. She was born at Stockwell (now, like Clapham, Streatham and Dulwich, part of Greater London) in 1793. She was a Quakeress, and, as a girl, worshipped at the Friends' Meeting, at Wandsworth. She was a connection of the well-known Quaker family of Coventry, a member of which was Elizabeth Fry's companion at the prison-gates, as she prosecuted her Christly labours among discharged female prisoners. Anne, herself, was a member of the Committee—composed of eleven Quakeresses and one clergyman's wife—which banded itself together in the humanitarian enterprise of ministering to the unfortunate women immured in Newgate Prison. During her girlhood years, she developed literary tastes and entered the writing circles of the day. She wrote respectable verse, and during a three-months stay in Edinburgh, visited Sir Walter Scott. The Wizard of Abbotsford commended her poetry, and enjoined her to continue. This was in 1818, and two years later, she accepted Henry Sturt's offer of marriage. The wedding was celebrated in Lambeth Parish Church,

in 1820, and led to the disowning of Anne by the Society of Friends. The following letter of dismissal was sent her by the Westminster Monthly Meeting:

Ann Sturt, late Barnard, a Member of this Meeting, having been married contrary to the Rules of our Society to a person not of our Religious Profession, notwithstanding she had been previously advised against it, both privately and by appointment of this Meeting, which having been considered, we think it incumbent to express our disunity with her Conduct, and do hereby disown the said Ann Sturt as a Member of our Religious Society. Nevertheless we feel desirous that, at a future time, it may appear suitable for her to be restored into Membership with us.

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting,

JOHN BELL, *Clerk*.

Despite this disownment, Henry Sturt and his wife continued to worship at Wandsworth Meeting, for a number of years. After a time, their boys—there were ten children born of this happy marriage—grew impatient of the monotony of a Quaker Meeting, and the family joined Clapham Congregational Church, of which Rev. James Hall was pastor; but to the end of her long life, Anne Barnard Sturt remained a true Quakeress at heart.

She was not only a woman of great spirituality, but of great strength of intellect [writes Dr. Meyer]. Few could write sweeter poetry than hers, and every event in the history of the great family of children and grandchildren seemed to awake some response from her lyric muse. It was

no small privilege for the young lad to be allowed to sit for long hours beside her, as she poured into his heart the noble thoughts which were ever welling up within her soul, and which, especially in the early morning, would be so fresh and vigorous. Besides all this, she had a special faculty of making other people's troubles her own, and of living in their lives; never thinking of self, but ever eager to say or do something to alleviate anxiety, and promote their comfort. In her heart there was a true spark of the enthusiasm of humanity.

Anne Sturt died in 1872, and after her death, a volume of reminiscences and literary remains was privately circulated by her family. One of the poems included in this work related especially to Dr. Meyer, and ran as follows:

LINES WRITTEN WHEN RECOVERING FROM A SEVERE ILLNESS AND WATCHING MY LITTLE GRANDCHILD, FREDDY MEYER, MOVING SOFTLY ABOUT MY SICK-BED.

December 19, 1856.

*My Freddy, when I look on thee,
So pure, so guileless, and so gay,
With sunny smile and eye of blue,
Clear as the blushing dawn of day—
I think how lovely is the trust
Which God to man has largely given;
So beauteous is the fallen dust,
With yet within a spark from heaven.*

*And must the world's seductive tread
Break such a holy calm as this?
Must ought surround thy peaceful bed
But dreams of purity and bliss?*

*Shall any sounds but peace and love
E'er hang upon that truthful tongue,
And where now broods the halcyon dove
Be bitter words and thoughts of wrong?*

*God keep thee, Freddy, in the world,
For thou some rugged steps must tread;
Thy Saviour's banner wide unfurled,
What cause have we for doubt or dread?
The world is strong, but stronger He
To whom we now commit our charge;
May His good angels compass thee
With love immeasurably large.*

One of the most noted of the boy's uncles, who periodically assembled in the house on Clapham Common, was Joseph Brotherton—from whom the boy had his second baptismal name—Member of Parliament for the Borough of Salford. He was an altogether worthy man, and did much to bring about the amendment of the iniquitous Factory Acts. The people of Salford erected a monument to his memory. It is stated that he made but a single speech in the House of Commons, which contained one passage, so frequently impressed upon young Meyer by his relatives, that he grew weary of its oft repetition. It ran as follows: "My riches consist not in the abundance of my possessions, but the fewness of my wants." Brotherton was a member of a religious sect who called themselves Bible Christians (not, however, to be confused with the Methodist body of the same name). Founded about a century ago, their original leader was in earlier life a clergyman pioneer of the

Liberal School of the Church of England and a tutor in one of the theological colleges of that Church. They have a distinctive belief regarding the Holy Spirit, believing the Holy Spirit to be an effluxion from God—not a person.

The home life amid which young Frederick Meyer spent his early years was of the finest imaginable character. His parents were possessed of ample means, and every legitimate wish of the boy and his sisters was lovingly gratified. God was feared, the Sabbath Day revered, and an environment that was lovely and of good report maintained day after day. Sheltered from all pernicious influences, small wonder that the children grew in grace, and in the knowledge and admonition of the Lord. Meyer looked back to those days with the liveliest satisfaction, and spoke of them, always, in loving gratitude.

It is pleasant [he says], in looking back over the years, to be unable to recall one moment's misunderstanding with those beloved parents, who are now in the presence of the King. One long pathway of unclouded sunshine stretches away from the shore of the present over the ocean expanse of the past. It is impossible to be thankful enough to my gentle, lovely mother for the careful drilling in Scripture which was her habit with us all. To this is owing a familiarity with the Bible which has been of inestimable value as the basis of after study. It was her regular practice to gather us around her on each Lord's Day morning for the searching of Bible references, and for reading books bearing directly on Scripture. And how can

we who shared in them ever forget the happy hours each Sunday afternoon, when we gathered around the piano, and sang hymn after hymn; our childish voices gathering strength as they were led and supported by that noble bass voice of my father, which was like an organ in the richness of its tones! It was not what they said, for they spoke very little directly to us, but what they were, and what they expected us to be, that seemed insensibly to form and mould our characters.

Especially was Dr. Meyer grateful for the Sundays that fell to his lot. Sixty or seventy years ago, the Sabbath Day was the dreariest and darkest day of the week, for children of a Nonconformist household. To say that many of us, whose fortune it was to be reared in one, dreaded the approach of Sunday, is to put it mildly indeed. Saturday to Monday was a positive nightmare—a literal bugaboo.

But young Meyer's parents made it a red-letter day for their children. The breakfast-hour was eight o'clock. No one was ever late for family worship, and there was no hurry or bustle. The clean linen on the table, the starched print dresses of the maids as they sat in a row, Bible in hand, whilst the husband and father led in prayer; the bread and butter that seemed fresher and sweeter than on other days; the texts said round the table after the eldest child had said grace,—in all these respects the day seemed to begin right. And the talk at the meal was always rather different, as though ordinary topics were by common consent tabooed; yet there was seldom what

might be termed directly religious conversation, demanding an unnatural silence among the children. The early dinner at one-thirty precisely, the joy of which was that the father was there and the family complete; the early tea, with its hour of singing first, and its repetition of hymns after; the light supper after church, to share in which was the coveted mark of growing older. It was Sunday, and there was a fitness and freshness in everything being different from the ordinary week-day.

At the Sunday dinner of these childish days [Dr. Meyer says] we always had a sirloin of beef and roast potatoes. Through a long course of years, without a single variation, that was so. Even now, when I eat sirloin of beef, especially the undercut, I have a kind of Sunday feeling. I remember that my father always had to turn the joint upside down, and that it was an exciting moment to us all lest he should splash a drop of gravy over the clean cloth. If a drop did go over, my mother hastened, with a palliating excuse, and applied salt—for what reason I have not the remotest idea; but it served as a temporary expedient, and covered the mishap. These things may appear trivial, but they were always associated with Sunday, and that made them memorable.

Frederick Meyer's parents were among the leading Baptists of their generation, and together with the elder children, drove in their carriage to Bloomsbury, where they attended the ministry of Dr. William Brock. At that time Dr. Brock was in the zenith of his fame, and Bloomsbury Chapel was crowded. One

corner seat in the area was occupied by Sir Morton Peto, the other by Mr. and Mrs. Meyer and their children. As the boy looked at the crowded galleries and listened eagerly to the prayers and sermons, he resolved that he also would some day be a minister. It was Dr. Brock's custom after the service to come down from the pulpit and shake hands with the congregation. Once he said to young Meyer, "Some day you will stand at the end of the aisle and shake hands with the people as I am doing now." At the end of the service not a word was spoken by any one until the carriage reached St. Martin's Church. Echoes of Dr. Brock's magnificent voice were still ringing in the children's ears. But after a while the father broke the silence by saying it was the grandest sermon he had ever heard, and he encouraged his little ones to repeat what they could remember of it. Often the flood of reminiscences lasted till they reached Vauxhall.

On Sunday evenings, in the days when the children were not yet old enough to attend church a second time, the boy would conduct a service of worship in father's dining-room, having, by way of a congregation, his sisters and an old servant. It would appear as though the future minister of the Gospel must have early developed that gift which, in after days, was his in such large measure, and that he used so effectively for more than fifty years—the ability to reach the hearts, and play upon the emotions of his hearers. He was never satisfied with his Sabbath evening discourse in his parents' dining-room, unless he had succeeded in making his eldest sister shed tears. She was rather

given at that time to lachrymose tendencies, and if the expected climax did not follow the sermon, the youthful preacher felt that it had missed its purpose.

Week-days and Sundays, the months and years of Frederick Meyer's childhood, flew by, almost uncounted in their flight. They left behind them, however, a flood of happy memories which enabled him to "have roses in December." He regarded it as being very wonderful that Providence had ordained that happy time, which sufficed to touch the lines of early life, into lasting and living beauty.

I believe [he declares] that a man can bear any losses, any sorrow or disappointment, if he has in the background of his mind the beautiful picture of a Christian home. My whole life is embosomed in lovely associations connected with my childhood at Clapham.

Then came school-life. Young Meyer's earliest education was received at a school conducted by a relative of the family, Mr. Samuel Wilkins. To reach it, the boy had to make "the daily trudge along the interminable Acre Lane." When he was about nine years of age, one of his sisters lapsed into delicate health, and the family removed to Brighton, the father making the daily journey to London. After a year or two of tuition under "Mr. Peto and his son, in the house which, with its observatory, was so prominent an object on entering Brighton station," Frederick was enrolled a scholar in Brighton College. It was possible, therefore, for him to sleep at home, and so combine the helpful influences of the family circle with the

esprit de corps and stimulus of a great public school. At first, the tenderly nurtured lad shrank from association with so many strong, boisterous spirits. Gradually, however, he grew accustomed to the daily routine and, on the whole, was happy. There is one incident of these days which Dr. Meyer relates that serves to throw a flood of light on the sort of lad he was, and of the difficulties he was compelled to encounter and surmount:

When I was a boy, about eleven or twelve [he writes], there were some big bullies at my school, who made my life a misery for me. I was a little fellow, not very strong, and I dared not complain of their ill-usage. One day, when they were torturing me more than usual, I begged very hard to be released, and they said, "Well, we will let you go on condition you bring us some foreign stamps tomorrow. If you don't we'll spifficate you." I promised—at such a moment I would readily have promised anything—but I had not the faintest idea where to get them, or even what foreign stamps were. It was a great many years ago, remember; and in those days collections were scarcely heard of. I, at any rate, knew nothing about them, and felt as helpless as the miller's daughter in the fairy tale who had to spin gold out of straw. I could think of no resource but prayer. I just prayed as hard as I could.

All night the boy could scarcely sleep a wink for thinking of the vague but awful fate threatening him if the stamps were not forthcoming. He was quite prepared for being half killed, if not wholly, for school

bullying was a dreadful thing in those days. The morning came, but no stamps had dropped upon his sleepless pillow; there were none on the breakfast table; no miracle had happened. His heart went down into his boots, and he dared not speak of his fears.

At last [he writes], it was time to start for school. Just on the threshold my reluctant footsteps turned back. "Father," I faltered, "do you know anything about foreign stamps?"

"Very odd that you should ask me," he replied. "In my business till now I seldom came across any, but just today I happen to have some in my pocket. There you are!" I did not wait to be pressed. I darted off to school with them. There outside the gate stood my tormentors, waiting to "spiflicate" me. Great was their surprise when I ran up to them, both hands out full of the precious envelopes, and, strange to say, their ill-treatment ceased from that hour, and I had no further trouble of the sort. Of all the providences of my life, that is the one that made the first and strongest impression upon me, showing me how true God's promise is, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are speaking I will hear."

Such incidents were exceptional, however, and young Frederick's experiences at Brighton College left him a lifelong defender of the public school systems of education. The lad may get knocked about a bit in the hurly-burly of school, but, on the whole, came out the better for the experience.

How can we overestimate the influence of our public schools in enlarging the mind, in rubbing

off ugly corners [he says], in giving a sense of independence and self-reliance to the youth of England? Even now as I write, I recall the excitement of the great cricket matches; the frays with roughs and other schoolboys, with whom we had perpetual feud, culminating in the uproarious proceedings of the Fifth of November; the paper-chases over the downs; the athletic sports, and the prodigious training that preceded them; the postage-stamp fever; the fossil furore; the expeditions with choice spirits over the rocks and along the cliffs when the tide was down; the opening of the chapel and the daily service. Oh, happy, happy days, whose traces will linger ever as the ripple marks of ocean wave upon the soft marl, which is now stamped with them forever!

When the lad was about fifteen years of age, his father suffered some severe business reverses. This necessitated the family leaving their beautiful home in Brighton, and returning to London. The father decided to wind up his business, and pay all his creditors. It subsequently transpired that, with a little more enterprise and patience, he might have tided over this difficult period, but his high sense of honour led him to shrink from the idea of becoming insolvent. The result of these losses was, of course, that the adolescent years of his son and daughters were spent in less luxury than they were permitted to enjoy in early childhood. But although luxury and wealth were gone, comfort and modest competency remained. This, Dr. Meyer afterward came to regard as being one of the most important factors in his whole life. It brought out all the lad's self-restraint, in order to save

needless expense; it took from him the temptation to expect from others, a deference due rather to wealth than worth; it brought about his going to live, for more than a year, with his beloved relatives, Dr. and Mrs. George Gladstone, at Clapham, and gave him the opportunity of meeting the cultivated circle which gathered about this charming home.

The beloved Baldwin Brown was, for some months, an occupant of the same house. A tremendous controversy raged, at the time, about Brown's book, *The Fatherhood of God*. Many of the views for which he was considered to be a heretic are now incorporated in the common faith of all churches. The boy had a passionate admiration for Baldwin Brown, which, in after life, he never lost. He recalled his slight, spare figure, beautiful face, and exquisitely modulated voice, and from Baldwin Brown learned to take a broad and generous view in theological matters, and never to forget the rule of Christian charity. Dr. Gladstone possessed a wide knowledge of the scientific world, and by his own researches into the chemistry of light, brought many distinguished visitors to the house, who opened up for the growing boy, new and wider thoughts of the great world outside. There were visits to the meetings of the British Association; evenings at the concerts of the Sacred Harmonic Society; talks about books, experiments, fossils and applied science. Such influences were invaluable, and combined to awaken the interest of the boy's expanding mind in things true and beautiful, and left but little foothold for the false and ugly potentialities of human existence.

But, amid all this boyish life [he wrote later], there was rising up within the heart, like a fountain from unknown depths, the steady resolve, as yet hardly realized, and never breathed, that the life was to be inspired by the one absorbing purpose of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Among my mother's papers I found recently some early attempts at sermons, and each Sunday night my proclivities found expression in the little service at which the servants attended. The hands that reached down out of heaven, moulding men, had already commenced to form a vessel, which in after days He was going in marvellous condescension to use.

The boy completed his early education at the school of Mr. C. P. Mason, of Denmark Hill. At the age of sixteen, he was faced with the momentous duty of deciding the course he proposed to follow in coming years. There was only one answer for the fateful question: the lad confided in his father, his earnest desire to become a minister of the Gospel. Dr. Brock was brought into consultation. This eminent preacher had had not a little to do with giving the first direction toward the formation of the earliest life-purpose of the little boy, who sat on the book-box of the great corner pew, in Bloomsbury Chapel. It was decided that he should preach a sermon before Dr. Brock. This was a tremendous ordeal for a mere lad, no matter how promising his gifts or how eager his desire to measure up to the occasion. Dr. Meyer declares that he never forgot the nervousness which overwhelmed him as he stood at the book-board. His knees

trembled, his hands shook, and he felt as if he must sink into the earth. The verdict on the sermon was favourable, but Dr. Brock wisely counselled that the boy go into business for two or three years before proceeding to the ministry. He accordingly entered the firm of Allan Murray, tea merchants, Billiter Square.

Thus more than two years were passed in a city counting-house, tasting tea, learning bookkeeping, and in acquiring habits of punctuality, exact attention to detail, and a knowledge of the work-a-day life of young men. Time and again, in subsequent days, Dr. Meyer expressed the wish that every theological student could have a similar education in business, for in this way he would learn the real needs and temptations of young men, and be able to exercise a much more effective interest. "By all means," he would say, "let them graduate in the college of city life, and study attentively the great books of human nature. It is impossible to preach to young men unless you *know* young men, and possess some knowledge of the peril and temptation of their daily life."

MAKING A MINISTER

WHILE engaged in faithfully carrying out his duties in the Billiter Square tea-house, young Meyer was busily studying in preparation for his chosen career. He rose early, and the habit of early rising thus acquired, clung to him throughout his entire life. In the counting-house, he declared himself and was known to all his fellow-clerks as an out-and-out Christian. "I found," he testified, in after years, "that my standing—popularity, if you will—was in no way affected by this fact. It is a good thing for a young fellow to be properly labelled, and to be able to give a bright and ready answer when those with whom he is brought into daily contact tease him about his profession of Christianity. The worst possible attitude is to pose as a martyr or display undue or unmanly sensitiveness. A man's religion, when it is *right*, fits, naturally, into his daily life."

In the evenings he attended lectures and classes or read the biographies of eminent pastors. He received much encouragement from his minister, the Rev. David Jones. It was in 1865 that Mr. Meyer preached his first sermon to a small company of people at a week-night meeting. His text was Psalm 84:11, "*The Lord will give grace and glory*," and in a little notebook diary, kept at this period, he recorded, "God helped

me most graciously." Dr. Brock arranged for him a trial sermon at his mission hall, Seven Dials, on February 20, 1866. There were present, beside the minister of Bloomsbury Chapel, the Rev. David Jones, Mr. M'Cree, and Mr. Meyer's father. The verdict of the listeners was in all respects favourable, and it was decided that the young man should enter Regent's Park College. From the first, he won the warm friendship of Dr. Angus, the Principal, and shortly after his admission wrote, "Dr. Angus I like more and more, as a man, a friend, and a teacher." In the latter part of his college course, he was accustomed to preach once or twice every Sunday, and in 1868, he was put in charge of Duke Street Chapel, Richmond, Surrey. Here he gathered a congregation and the people pressed him to remain and build up a strong church. The young student, however, continued his college course until 1869, taking in that year the B.A. degree of London University. He then accepted an invitation to Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, as assistant to Rev. Charles M. Birrell, and so began a wonderful ministry destined to last for sixty years.

Of Pembroke Chapel, Meyer, in after days, always wrote with tenderness and affection.

I shall never forget that church, the stately, silver-headed deacons, and the venerable pastor. It was an honour and a privilege [he says] to be near Mr. Birrell, whose saintly character was revered by all who knew him. He was an ascetic in many of his habits, making it a rule to eat less food on Friday, and spending the whole of Satur-

day evening in prayer. He had travelled much, and often in the evenings his daughter Olive and his son Augustine and I would gather round him and listen to his wonderful tales of foreign cities. I have spent happy days with him at Rivaulx Abbey, Barnard Castle, and other places of interest. After my marriage he came to stay with me from time to time. Mr. Augustine Birrell was three years younger than myself. In my Liverpool days he was already showing signs of his wonderful abilities. I used to envy the rapidity with which he could read a book at one sitting, while I required so much more time.

Augustine Birrell was, of course, the noted statesman, barrister and author, who was President of the Board of Education, 1905-7, and Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1907-16. To Birrell (it will be recalled) fell the thankless task of piloting the Education Bill of 1906 through the House of Commons, only to see it torn to pieces by the House of Lords in the November and December of that year.

Charles M. Birrell was a man of strong personality, and he impressed his young associate beyond the ordinary. "Birrell's personality was altogether too strong," says Dr. J. H. Shakespeare, "and it was not until he had shaken off a kind of idolatrous imitation of his senior that the young minister manifested something of his own power." Meyer himself corroborates this, in a paragraph here appended:

In preparing my sermons and addresses, I naturally followed the lines of the senior minister. This was a mistake, for Birrell's habit was to

write out, in entirety, and commit to memory. Such a method was totally unsuitable to me and it was, perhaps, a good thing for me that I removed to York, after two and a half years at Pembroke Chapel.

Despite the somewhat hampering effect which the following of Birrell's pulpit methods had on his own effectiveness, Meyer held the minister of Pembroke Chapel in highest esteem, and always spoke of him in terms of veneration and utmost regard.

To have known Mr. Birrell is to have known one of the sweetest, holiest, most catholic, and most cultured men of his time [he wrote, twenty years later]. He was richly endowed by nature in his erect and elegant figure, his intellectual face, with its flashing, expressive eye, and noble expanse of forehead, surmounted by the abundance of raven hair. His preaching was deeply spiritual, full of cultured thought, expressed in polished and classic phrase. But it was in his conversational powers that he was *facile princeps*. It was a rich treat to sit with him in the evening after supper, and let him talk of men he had known, of places he had visited, books he had read, and ceremonials which he had witnessed. Oh, rare and glorious man, will it ever be my lot again to be admitted into thy inner friendship? Surely thou wilt be too much sought after in that world where such as thou take the first rank among their peers!

The chief event of young Meyer's sojourn in Liverpool was his courtship and marriage of Miss J. E.

Jones, of Birkenhead, whom he married February 20, 1871, Mr. Birrell performing the ceremony. It proved a wonderfully happy union, which lasted for fifty-eight years, terminating only with Mrs. Meyer's death in January, 1929, three months before her husband was called to his eternal reward. Although Mrs. Meyer never took an active part in Meyer's public work and ministry, she watched over his comfort with assiduous care, took patient care of his home, became his travelling companion the world around, and in every other true and wifely implication of the term, constituted herself a loyal and loving helpmeet for the man to whom, in God, she was joined.

In 1872, F. B. Meyer became pastor of Priory Street Baptist Chapel, in the city of York. He described it as being "a bright, brief pastorate." The outstanding event in this ministry was, of course, his being used of God to introduce Dwight L. Moody to the British churches, to which extended reference is made in Chapter IX. It is not overstating any aspect of the initial fact to say that, humanly speaking, but for F. B. Meyer, Moody's remarkable mission in Great Britain had not been. Meyer's interest in the work of the great American evangelist never flagged, while Moody always looked upon F. B. Meyer as one of the conspicuous spiritual forces of his age and time.

In 1874, Dr. Haycroft, the pastor of Victoria Road Baptist Church, Leicester, died, and F. B. Meyer was invited to succeed him. The call was accepted, and followed by a four-year pastorate. This was a rich and influential church, and some of Meyer's zealous

activities irked the staid respectability of some of its chief supporters. This period in Meyer's ministry had a limit set to it, one Sunday evening, when a well-to-do deacon burst in upon the pastor, who, aflame with evangelistic zeal, was holding an after-service in the chancel of his church, with the protest: "We cannot have this sort of thing here. This is not a Gospel shop!"

Meyer promptly resigned his pastorate, and had in mind to leave Leicester altogether. Fifteen of the young merchants of the town, however, appealed to him to remain, and promised to guarantee his salary. Meyer consented, and began preaching to the people in a public hall, called Museum Building. In the course of a few weeks the Sunday evening congregation crowded the place, even to an adjacent room where people would sit to hear, although they could not see, the preacher. Large numbers professed conversion, and joined the new church, which was now formed in order to give the work permanence. The question of baptism was left to the conscience of each individual. The pastor practiced the rite of immersion, but altogether independently of questions of church polity or discipline.

In the course of a year, it became evident that a permanent church building was required. Initial steps towards securing a suitable site, on which to erect an edifice, were taken, and on a cold, wintry evening, in March, 1880, some three hundred persons assembled to dedicate the land to the service of Almighty God. The memorial stones of the build-

ing, known, upon its completion, as Melbourne Hall, were laid July 1, 1880, and the opening services held July 2, 1881.

Melbourne Hall, standing at the juncture of four roads, from one of which its name derives, rapidly developed a marvellous activity, and F. B. Meyer became, in a real and definite sense, the Minister of Leicester. He was known and respected by all classes, and there was not a townsman in the place, from the Chief Magistrate down, who would pass him in the street without a greeting. He gathered about him a congregation numbering fifteen hundred to two thousand, and a church membership of more than a thousand. He instituted numberless activities for aiding the poor, the erring and the fallen. He developed a great scheme of social service, such as years later, became familiar in all large towns and cities, and founded a great institutional church. An extended account of some of the splendid work he did, will be found in a subsequent chapter of this book.

The town of Leicester is built on a clayey soil, and this condition affected Mrs. Meyer's health, and finally necessitated her removal to a more suitable location. At Christmas, 1887, after a three-week vacation in Algeria, F. B. Meyer decided to accept an invitation to the pastorate of Regent's Park Chapel, in Northwest London. The people of Leicester, reluctantly compelled to part with their favourite minister, subscribed a testimonial gift of £400 (\$2,000), which sum, together with an illuminated address, was presented to Mr. Meyer, at a great public meeting held in Museum

Building and presided over by the Mayor of the town, Sir Thomas Wright.

It is with bitter pain and regret that I tear myself away from Melbourne Hall [said Mr. Meyer, in response]. Nothing but an acute sense of the Divine Will could carry me through the poignant sorrow of saying farewell to the most loyal and truest friends man ever had. "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee."

Mr. Meyer removed to London to succeed Dr. Landels, at Regent's Park Chapel, in the beginning of the following year. Here he remained four years, great success crowning his work. He attracted a large congregation, drawn from many classes. The church was strong in membership and social standing. Indeed, the church was a wealthy aristocracy, and while the pastor had "a big salary and big lords," his big heart was cramped by conditions attending his ministry. The work at Regent's Park certainly was strictly denominational, and he yearned for a wider field. During his pastorate pew-rents were abolished, and the seats in the galleries were made free, while area sittings were allotted on the principle of voluntary subscription.

When Mr. Meyer had been at Regent's Park four years, Dr. Newman Hall, the world-famed minister of Christ Church, Lambeth, announced his approaching retirement. Mr. Meyer was invited to succeed him, and accepted the invitation, notwithstanding the fact that the change would involve a substantial decrease in

salary. He believed that in Lambeth the possibility of carrying out work such as he had begun at Leicester, presented itself. So, leaving Regent's Park and its fine salary, he went "over the water" (as Londoners term it) to labour in a much more arduous field, on the Surrey side of the Thames.

DOWN LAMBETH WAY

ROWLAND HILL, of Surrey Chapel, was the son of Sir Rowland Hill of Hawkstone Hall, where he was born, August 23, 1744. While yet a very young man he became converted to God and zealously laboured as a clergyman of the Established Church of England. But he refused to be bound by some of its canons of exclusiveness, insisting on his right, as a minister of Christ, to preach the Gospel, in season and out of season. For this resolve and procedure he was reproved as refractory and, by some bishops, forbidden to enter the pulpits of churches in their dioceses. Zealous for the spiritual good of the neglected poor of London, he determined to labour among them. Selecting a suitable location in Blackfriars Road, on the Surrey side of the Thames, he, aided by well-to-do friends, built Surrey Chapel, which was opened for worship June 8, 1783. Rowland Hill's text on this occasion was: "*We preach Christ crucified,*" 1 Cor. 1:23.

At first Hill was assisted in his work by Episcopalian evangelicals, but, gradually, help from that quarter ceased, the clergy of the Establishment shrinking from the censure with which Hill was honoured. In course of time, the assistance given to this minister to the masses, came almost entirely from the ranks of English

Nonconformity. It was Hill's habit to engage in itinerant labours during the summer months, raising funds for his work, and, in his absence, the pulpit of Surrey Chapel was supplied by the best preachers the country afforded, there being few, if any, noted divines of that period (outside the ranks of the Establishment), who did not, at one time or another, minister within the walls of this famous house of worship. Rowland Hill continued his labours in Blackfriars Road until he entered into rest, April 17, 1833.

Hill never formally severed himself from the Church of England, and continued to use the Book of Common Prayer and to conduct public worship after the manner prescribed thereby. Yet, strictly speaking, Surrey Chapel did not belong to any denomination, and it is a mistake to suppose (as was, generally, the case) that the church belonged to what was known as the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection. Surrey Chapel was simply Christian, and purely independent of all associations, outside, and beyond itself.

The trust deed was a peculiar document, and gave an almost unlimited power to the minister to conduct public worship and govern the church according to his own judgment and discretion. The officers of the church consisted of a minister, a curate, the trustees, whose duties related, chiefly, to secular affairs, and seven elders, whose functions were almost exclusively spiritual. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be administered twice monthly, and with some modifications, the Liturgy of the Church of England to be used at the Sunday morning and evening wor-

ship, but at other times, this order of service was not obligatory. As Newman Hall himself put it, later, the church was "broad and spacious."

It represents Presbyterianism in so far as the minister with a body of elders [he says], control church affairs. It is Congregational, in as much as all the business of its various associations is annually submitted to a general meeting of the congregation or parish. There are, moreover, numerous meetings of the members for mutual prayer and conversation on subjects of personal spiritual experience, which may be regarded as a Methodist element. Some of the elders are Baptist, some Pedo-Baptists. No question is asked of any candidate for membership respecting ecclesiastical preferences or polity. There is no form of discipline or creed to which prospective members are called upon to subscribe; but a solemn covenant is read at Holy Communion, on the first Sunday in every year, the members of the church standing and responding with a hearty "Amen" when the minister has finished reading it. The sole bond of action is love to Christ, and willingness to work and worship together in His Name.

When Rowland Hill died, in 1833, he was succeeded by James Sherman, a man of tender sympathy and exceptional preaching ability. Sherman had a tremendous power of appeal—chiefly to the emotions—and no preacher of his time, possibly, possessed it in larger measure. Accounts have come down to us of how Sherman's congregations were, frequently, swept as

with the very winds of God. With conspicuous success he laboured at Surrey Chapel until 1854, when, in consequence of failing health, he retired to a less exacting charge. The pulpit was offered by the church officers to Newman Hall, Minister of Albion Street (Congregational) Church, in the city of Hull. The call was accepted, Hall beginning his notable ministry on the same Sunday that Sherman resigned, preaching from the text: "*Who is sufficient for these things? Brethren, pray for us,*" 2 Cor. 2:16; 1 Thess. 5:25.

Christopher Newman Hall was born in Maidstone, Kent, May 20, 1816, son of Joseph V. Hall, proprietor of *The Maidstone Journal*. He was educated at University College, Highbury, and entered on his first pastorate at Hull in 1842, and there remained until called to Surrey Chapel, in 1854. He was met at the outset by an onerous and—to a man of less tenacity and courage—almost disheartening task.

A considerable sum of money had been left by Hill, for the perpetuation of the work of Surrey Chapel, after the expiration of the lease of the premises in Blackfriars Road. Owing to some legal flaw in the will, however, the money was not available. The leaseholders were approached by the trustees of the church, who sought permission to purchase. This request was refused, and the increased rent required was £800 (\$2,000). There was no alternative but to build, so land was purchased for £9,000 (\$45,000). Newman Hall undertook to raise the necessary funds for the erection of a new church building. The site chosen was the juncture of Westminster Bridge and Lambeth

Roads. It was formerly occupied by the Asylum for Female Orphans, and the location is still known, legally, as Asylum Cross. A tollgate stood here, barring New (Westminster Bridge) Road, well into the nineteenth century, one of a series south of the Thames, which gave tickets serving for admittance at all other gates belonging to the same trust, on the Surrey side of the Thames.

The church edifice cost more than £63,000 (\$315,000), half of which Newman Hall collected himself. The building is a beautiful example of later Gothic—a thing of sheer beauty, inside and out. One comes upon the lovely pile, set down among the immense, squalidly poor areas of Lambeth, with a sort of half-gasp of delight. The beauty of the whole structure, intrinsically and inherently great, gathers a measure of added loveliness from the sordid character of its surroundings—like a jewel in a swine's snout. The spire, named after Lincoln, was the gift of American friends and admirers of Newman Hall. Robert Lincoln, son of the Emancipator, laid the memorial stone and the church was dedicated and opened for public worship in 1876.

Here Newman Hall sustained a notable ministry until July, 1892. Few, if any, minister of any Non-conformist communion, in any age, exercised a wider influence than Newman Hall exerted during these years. He came to be known as "the Dissenter's Bishop," and his vogue, for years, was simply extraordinary. His interest in things American remained unabated; he laboured, incessantly, in the cause of

temperance and total abstinence, and his booklets, of a pronounced evangelical character, attained an enormous vogue. The best known of these is *Come to Jesus*, of which more than five million have been circulated in forty different languages. As intimated above, the ever increasing burdens of a rapidly changing neighbourhood and of the years, compelled his retirement in 1892. He died ten years later, February 18, 1902.

Newman Hall was a man greatly gifted; his was a beautiful soul that loved beauty. Christ Church, built by him and for him, was the embodiment of his æsthetic taste. A fact not generally known is, that Christ Church was built from plans drawn by Newman Hall himself. John Ruskin, who never cared much for Nonconformist preachers, brought against them the charge of lacking in a love of beauty and the artistic sense. For a man of genius, Ruskin often talked a lot of unmitigated nonsense, not least in the statement just cited. He knew nothing whatever of the men he thus maligned, and Hall was roused by his unjust accusation and promptly nailed it down by preparing the plans for his own church, which, when built, was the most beautiful Nonconformist house of worship in the entire city of London.

The church was built from a plan of my own [he declared in his valedictory sermon, preached in July, 1892]. I drew it, embodying my ideas and submitted it to the architects; the church, as it stands, is the realization of a dream of many months, which occupied both my waking and sleeping hours.

Newman Hall was a man of great public spirit, too, and came into contact with many of the leading men of his day. In his *Reminiscences*, he speaks of Gladstone, Bright, Tyndall, Holman Hunt, Cardinal Manning, Tom Hughes, Dean Lefroy, Canon Wilberforce and many another whom he knew more or less intimately. During the American Civil War he toured Great Britain from John o' Groats to Land's End, pleading for patience, tolerance, and proper understanding. Above and beyond all, however, he was essentially a preacher. He always touched the great note in preaching. His sermons were not made up of comments on Darwin and Huxley, with bits of Tennyson and Browning thrown in—a practice common enough in those days—but struck the deep note of humanity, and spoke to those mystic yearnings of the heart of man which are eternal. He believed that man needed to be redeemed; that the heart of man was beating spasmodically, and needed to be adjusted to the rhythm of the heart of God.

After a brief delay, the announcement of Newman Hall's retirement, in July, 1892, was followed by another to the effect that the pastorate of Christ Church had been offered to Rev. F. B. Meyer, of Regent's Park Chapel, and accepted by him. To the members of his church and congregation in Northwest London, Mr. Meyer wrote (in part) as follows:

. . . There is no alternative than that I should inform you of my resolution to accept the pastorate of Christ Church, recently erected by Dr. Newman Hall, and which, in consequence of the

promise of the Trustees and Elders to provide a baptistry, I am able to accept without violation of principle; whilst the difficulties of the situation, the meagre congregation, the lessened stipend, indicate that I am not animated by mercenary motives in contemplating the exchange.

There are various reasons which have led me to this decision, first of which is a conviction which has been very strongly borne in on me that our Lord and Master, the Chief Shepherd of the flock, is calling me thither. I cannot get away from this. I can get no other response to my many cries for direction.

Then I was never an ardent denominationalist. Loyalty to your traditions as a church has led me to throw myself into the affairs of the London Baptist Association, but I have often felt these were not the elements in which I could do my best work, and recent events have more than ever tended to make me feel that I could not conscientiously remain in the position into which I had drifted without taking an active part in a controversy for which I have neither inclination nor adaptation.

The question has presented itself to me thus—shall I devote the remaining years of my manhood to the service of a section of the Church of Christ, or accept a position which is equally in touch with all sections of Evangelical Christians? and the whole drift of my past life and work has pointed to the inevitable conclusion, that I can only give one answer to that question and accept the latter alternative.

There is one other thing to which I will make allusion. I have often questioned whether I was acting consistently to my deepest principles, to be

officiating as the minister of an influential and successful church, drawing a large salary and surrounded by every sign of success, and welcomed in all parts of the country as a popular preacher, whilst the great masses of the people were living in sin and need in the more densely populated districts of London.

An opportunity is now presented to me of fulfilling a long-cherished purpose, and I want to engage in it with the feeling that you freely give me up to it, and yield me your sympathy and your prayers. . . .

The clause in the trust deed of Christ Church, relating to baptism, and which enabled Meyer to accept its pastorate without abandonment of his own personal belief, did, of course, affect his standing in the ranks of the Baptist ministry. As Dr. J. H. Shakespeare put it a few years later: "A new chapter began when he [Meyer] quitted the Baptist ministry, to succeed Newman Hall at Christ Church. Since then, he has been interdenominational and cosmopolitan. Of course, we, of the Baptist Union, have been compelled to make Meyer President, in order to let the religious world know to which denomination he really belongs."

At the end of July, 1892, Mr. Meyer sailed for America, and was absent from England nearly two months. He returned the last week in September and began his pastorate at Christ Church, Sunday, October 2. The morning was grey and cheerless with a steady, drizzling rain falling; but an excellent congregation assembled to welcome the new minister. He

preached from the text: "*By the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God,*" 2 Cor. 4:2. In the course of a sermon of fervency and power, Mr. Meyer said: "Sir Walter Scott tells us how Old Mortality spent his days in removing the lichened encrustations from the grave-stones of the Scottish martyrs, until the inscriptions thereon could be read fair and clearly. Something of that sort—by God's grace—must be the work of my ministry in Lambeth."

The Communion service followed the sermon [wrote one who was present], one of the best I have attended in recent years. Nearly the entire congregation remained for the ordinance. Outside, everything was grey and cheerless, rain was falling fast and a heavy mist hung over the river. Church-goers were hurrying homeward, but one's thoughts were not with them, but with those who were hidden away in the courts and alleys of Lambeth. Who is to reach these? The most brilliant statesmanship and the most enlightened philanthropy can touch but the surface. It is men like F. B. Meyer that Lambeth needs, for it is they who, under the varying externalities, hear, in these hearts, the music of the spheres.

Thus began a great ministry, concerning which the remainder of these pages might well be devoted. Meyer began, from the very start, to maintain the paramount influence and importance of Christ Church as a great spiritual centre. When he began, the congregations, especially those of Sunday evenings, were

badly run down, the average attendance being about one hundred. A change for the better was immediately apparent; at the end of two years, the auditorium, seating twenty-three hundred, was packed regularly, each Sabbath evening, and in the course of four years the membership had almost doubled, reaching the figure of 1,060.

Meyer early began a thorough canvass of his church district, visiting the homes of the people and planning the departments of work which in the course of time made Christ Church so famous. He was specially encouraged by the presence of the old Southwark Sunday School Society, in connection with which there were thirty mission halls or Sunday schools scattered through the district. This society gave Mr. Meyer an entrance into the most densely populated part of South London. From the first, he made it clear that temperance and social work was not undertaken with a view to attracting the people to Christ Church, but for their own benefit and elevation. He decided to continue the accustomed method of conducting the services with some slight modifications. The Anglican order of service, altered and abbreviated, was used in the morning, but in the evening the service was made popular and attractive.

After a while, however, he began to ponder more and more the inky stream of vileness, drunkenness, prostitution and misery which rolled through the immense, squalidly poor district of Lambeth. And as he pondered, it was borne in upon him, that part of his duty, as a minister of Christ's Gospel in "darkest

London," was to attack and, if possible, to eliminate conditions which made virtue difficult and vice easy. He became a Christian politician. He headed a movement to close saloons. He was the means of shutting up nearly five hundred immoral houses in Lambeth alone! He became a Borough Councillor. In his church he established a club for working men, a labour bureau, a Mothers' Meeting of eight hundred members which he conducted himself, a Boys' Brigade, a savings bank, and a Thrift Club. There were Sisters engaged in rescue work. The Men's Brotherhood, which supplied a large body of workers, was the backbone of the whole system. For the young people there were holiday camps and recreations of every sort. The refreshment department was so continuous that it seemed as if an eternal "tea-drinking" were going on. The dingy streets of Lambeth were brightened. Near Christ Church once lived the terrible Hooligan family, which gave its name to the type known throughout the world. But the Hooligans were reformed, elevated and cleansed.

Meyer threw himself into the manifold activities of Christ Church with amazing ardour. Exhibiting an adaptability which no contemporary of the early years, and only Silvester Horne in the later could equal, he entered into every conceivable phase of church life. Exceptional as was the quality of the service he was enabled to render in every department, he was (so I thought) at his best in his relation to his Men's Brotherhood. What a gathering that was, a quarter of a century ago! What *a way* the man had with him, to

be sure! Neither before, nor since, have I seen or heard a man who, with such consummate ease, commanded the attention and compelled the interest of working men, to the consideration of moral issues. The facility with which he did it made the whole business appear as though it were a simple, elementary sort of effort, instead of its being what it was, and still remains—one of the most difficult tasks in the whole realm of religious activity.

Writing of this easy intimacy, which enabled F. B. Meyer to obtain a hearing for religious themes, among those who are credited with regarding them, either with scornful indifference or open enmity, recalls a story, told some years ago, by A. G. Gardiner, at that time Editor of *The Daily News*, concerning a Cockney 'bus-driver and the Bishop of London:

Look at 'im, will yer [said the 'bus-driver to a passenger sitting just behind him, as he waved his whip towards the crowd gathered round the Bishop, preaching from the open-air pulpit, at St. James's, Piccadilly]. Just look at 'im! I ain't religious, mind yer, an' I cawn't stomach parsons. They're fair pizen to me, as a rule. But 'im—well, 'e's different. There's somethin' 'uman abaht 'im. I've 'eered 'im down East, many a time. And let me tell yer, that when yer've been a-listenin' to 'im fer a bit, a kind o' clean feelin' takes a 'old on yer—same as if it were yer day orf, an' yer'd 'ad a bally 'ot bawth, and got yer Sunday clobber on! Tike it from me, that bloke's one in a million!

With equal point and with equal truth that story

could have been related of F. B. Meyer. Allowing for differences of dialect and forms of verbal expression, the opinion of the members of Christ Church Men's Brotherhood, concerning its founder and leader, re-echoed the sentiments entertained by the 'busman towards his popular bishop. At these great meetings—and they *were* great—Meyer literally became one with the men themselves. Without sacrifice of principle or dignity; without the barest suspicion of trimming his sails to catch the winds of popularity, he contrived to be a "pal." He never attempted to fill his audience with a sense of the awful respectability of religion, but with a sense of its abounding goodfellowship, and amazingly succeeded.

In such a gathering F. B. Meyer was assuredly at his best; at such seasons the tide of his mental and moral influence touched high-water mark. Time and again, I have seen that great crowd of men literally *hanging* on his message of enheartenment; I have noted how Meyer's tenacious grip on matters vitally related to the life lying immediately around and ahead of his hearers, imparting inspiration and courage to fellows facing and fighting the problems of bitter existence, in a great city. Time and again, have I seen men of all ages lift their heads in fine and firm resolve as Meyer bade them do valiantly for truth and righteousness, and have marked them flash back at him an eloquent, if silent answer which, had it found verbal expression, would have been: "By God's good grace we will!" Yet it was not by force of magnetic emotion, that all this was accomplished. Rather was it

achieved by the dominance of a great personality, by the looming large of an intellectual force, and (best of all) by the prestige of a brave, fearless, brother-man.

Among the many treasures which, at one time, were preserved in Mr. Meyer's vestry at Christ Church, was a manuscript volume which he called *The Book of Life*. It contained autograph letters from men who had professed conversion as a result of the Sunday afternoon Brotherhood meeting. The manifest joy with which Mr. Meyer always exhibited these trophies of spiritual victory, bore eloquent testimony to the ardent desire which burned within him for the reclamation and salvation of his fellow-men. Through all these burning activities, Meyer was content with a modest salary; indeed, he gave the larger part of it back to the church, to aid in maintaining its various institutions. In everything he did, a true minister of Jesus Christ and a brother to his fellows found expression. He served a Master whom he knew well and loved devotedly, and the sincerity of the life thus centred and controlled, carried power with God and influence with men.

In 1907, the resignation of his pastorate, which he had planned in 1902 but postponed for five years, took effect, and, almost immediately, he went off on a ramble over a greater part of the globe—chiefly the East—an experience which appeared to broaden his range as a preacher and writer. In 1909, Dr. Meyer received an invitation to return to Regent's Park Chapel. He accepted it, and remained there until 1915, when he was asked to return to Christ Church. Thus he was

twice pastor of Regent's Park Chapel, and twice pastor of Christ Church. Surely a unique experience in the life of any minister! Once again, at Lambeth, he threw himself into pastoral work, and so busy did he become that, in order to save the time journeying to and from his home, he had a bedroom fixed up on the church premises, where he would often sleep. The crushing load of debt which rested on the place when he so chivalrously accepted the call to return to the pastorate was steadily reduced, and a great work done.

May 20, 1916, marked the centenary of the birth of Newman Hall, and a great gathering of Sunday school scholars was held in Christ Church, in the afternoon. Dr. Meyer's sermon, at the morning service, took the form of a tribute to his predecessor. After outlining the story of Newman Hall's early days, the preacher recalled how, in July, 1854, James Sherman personally handed over to his successor the charge of the church, just as, thirty-eight years later, in July, 1892, Newman Hall gave to himself the right hand of fellowship as fourth minister. "May I be spared for many years, worthily to maintain it," added Dr. Meyer.

In 1917, F. B. Meyer reached "the allotted span," and his birthday fell on a Sunday. By half-past ten, his beautiful vestry was a bower of spring flowers, and he had received a sheaf of telegrams. In the afternoon, he addressed his Brotherhood on *How to be Young Though Seventy*. At the morning service the subject of his sermon was *Death Abolished*. "Death, today," he said, "is regarded no longer as

an ending but as a beginning, no more as dissolution, but as emancipation; no more as just a wreck coming into harbour past repair, but as a ship starting upon a voyage over a boundless ocean. We have learned that death is just an incident in physical life, no more to be dreaded than teething or adolescence. The life and teaching of Jesus, and particularly His Resurrection, have taken the horror and the terror out of death." Dr. Meyer closed with these simple, touching words of personal testimony:

I knew Him as a boy. I trusted Him because of the testimony of my parents and of my minister. Since then I have wintered and summered with Him, and spent days and nights with Him. I know what He can be when a man sins, and fails, and when the heart is hard and loveless. I now know Him whom once I simply believed, and on this seventieth birthday this is my assurance—that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him. We cannot wear Him out or tire Him, and our sin is no barrier against His love.

Towards the close of 1919, he felt that the time had come to once more lay down the burden of his pastorate at Christ Church, and began to cast about for a successor. Writing in *The Christian World* (London), Dr. W. C. Poole, the present minister, relates how he first met Dr. Meyer at a meeting in Spurgeon's Tabernacle at which he (Dr. Poole) was one of the speakers.

When I sat down [writes Dr. Poole] he came up behind me, and, putting a card in my hand,

asked if I would preach at Christ Church the following Sunday. Naturally I assented gladly to the request. Later on I preached several times in the church in his presence. At the end of 1919 he wrote and asked me to come and see him in his vestry. In the course of the conversation he said, "I am now seventy-two years of age, and I have been looking round for someone to cast my mantle on. I think you are the man." Later he said, "A voice has told me that I have met the man who is to be my successor."

At this time Dr. Meyer was serving as Secretary to the Free Church Council, and he suggested to Christ Church officials that he take a five-months leave of absence from his pulpit, which Dr. Poole was to supply. This arrangement was entered into, and duly carried through. Dr. Poole was engaged to go to Japan for the World's Sunday School Convention in October, 1919, but before sailing, he accepted the invitation of Christ Church to succeed Dr. Meyer.

It was agreed that my official ministry should date from January, 1920, and that I should begin my ministry on Easter Sunday, 1920 [Dr. Poole says]. The beautiful letters Dr. Meyer wrote me about this time are before me and are still fragrant with most hallowed association. The church records will show that my first official act was to move that Dr. Meyer be made minister-emeritus, and that he be permitted to retain a vestry for his private use. Our friendship during the nearly ten years grew into a delightful fellowship. Again and again he would come into my

vestry and talk over with me the deep things in his own spiritual experience.

And so, relinquishing Christ Church to Dr. Poole, F. B. Meyer entered on the last phase of his great and worthy term of service. He continued to give of his best to the Free Church Council, through his second term as President, and up to the time of his relinquishing the Secretaryship to Rev. Thomas Nightingale. He went his own way, to and fro in the earth, as an apostle at large, a bearer of good tidings to the children of men.

Yet Christ Church was written indelibly upon his heart. He remained its pastor-emeritus until the end; in its great traditions he lived, in its fellowship he died. Possibly this chapter devoted, as it is, to Christ Church, may very fittingly be made to conclude with the last message Dr. Meyer sent to its pastor and his flock. It was written four days before the post came for him, enjoining him to set out on a journey, from whence he would not return:

NURSING HOME, BOURNEMOUTH,
March 24, 1929.

DEAR DR. POOLE—OFFICERS AND MEMBERS,

I have suddenly learned that my life is closing more rapidly than I expected. I dare not ask you to come and see me, as I am kept so absolutely quiet, but I send you my love. First to the dear Pastor and his wife—who have always treated me with unsparing affection—God bless them both! I pray God also that the ministry of my friend

may be increasingly evangelical and spiritual. I am absolutely sure that the springs of religious life are ever rising where the heart is true and pure and loyal to our Lord. God bless you, my dear friend, in your earnest ministry! The majority of the officers were young men in my first pastorate, when we were all inspired by the spirit of self-sacrifice, intense passion for souls, and loyalty to our church—these were the characteristics of the earliest years, and I pray God they may be a beacon star. In a very special way the officers of the church set the pace of a church, and their personal character becomes infused into the coming generation. When I think of the masses of people around us in Lambeth, it makes one yearn to see our church filled with such, and I am perfectly sure that the throwing of the doors open to the simple Gospel service on Sunday evening would be quickly responded to by those who are outside. The love of God, the grace of Christ our Lord, and the anointing, quickening and empowering grace of the Holy Spirit be with you all. I send my love,

Yours affectionately,

F. B. MEYER.

The last service which the aged and honoured minister attended in the church he loved and served so well, was on February 1, fifty-six days before the termination of his earthly life. The occasion was a meeting of farewell tendered to Miss Jennie Street, the well-known Sunday school worker, who was about to commence a world tour. He is described as having been in the very best of spirits, the gaiety of his happy

mood communicated itself to the entire company. Once again, some two months later, all that was mortal of F. B. Meyer would come—be borne, rather—to this hallowed fane. But his spirit would be elsewhere—mingled with the spirits of other just men made perfect. Or would it? “*Are they not all ministering spirits?*” And does it work any violence to the angels of our better nature to suppose, that the liberated spirit of Dr. Meyer was not far from any one of those who, sorrowing that they should see his face no more, gathered about his funeral bier?

THE MAN IN THE PULPIT

IT is proposed to devote this chapter to a consideration, not only of the message F. B. Meyer delivered, but to the manner of its presentation and delivery. The opportunities given me for formulating the estimates which follow, were many, and cover a span of years, the length of which renders me far from comfortable, when I hold them in contemplation. It is sufficient to say, however, that one end of that span rests in the far-off nineties, the other in some recent memories of two years ago.

I once knew an old Lancashire shoemaker, incorrigibly given to what is known as religious gipsying. Whenever a preacher of reputation came to his town (which was pretty frequent), the old man was always on hand to hear him. As a matter of course, this habit took him away from his own church services quite a good deal, and one day his minister took him to task.

"John," he said, "nobody admires your many excellent qualities more heartily than I. But this habit of wandering around the churches—a form of spiritual dissipation, by the way—both concerns and irritates me. Why do you practise it?"

"Well, sir," replied the old man, "I'm only an ould shoe-cobbler, an' I havna much book-larnin'. But I'm

th' same about preachin' as I am about eatin'. *I like things nicely served!* "

"Nicely served!" How instinctively these two words suggest F. B. Meyer! No preacher in Protestant Christendom excelled him in the art of presenting finished material. Nothing crude, broken, ill-considered, half-digested or amateurish, found place in his pulpit efforts. There were no hammer-marks. And the cumulative effect was, to deservedly earn for F. B. Meyer, the enviable reputation of being, for many years, one of the most popular preachers in the English-speaking world.

Writing, some fifteen years ago, of Meyer's pulpit style, Hugh Sinclair said:

His preaching is expressive of his personality, suggesting spiritual fastidiousness, and a sweet, sun-washed serenity of soul. So simple and intimate is his utterance that many hearers will scarcely divine the art that conceals art, but the practised will soon realize with what consummate ease and subtle mastery of effect he handles speech and thought, and how enchantingly he plays upon an instrument whose limitations are known and accepted by him.

Quite often on a Sunday evening, in the years when this century was at its dawn, I made a long trip, right across London, to Christ Church, to hear Dr. Meyer, and never once regretted the journey. I would go, intending to make copious notes of his sermon, for journalistic purposes. Yet I never took them. Once the

spell of this splendid Christian's pervasive personality was laid upon me, pencil and note-book were alike forgotten. No other man I ever listened to, was so completely able to hold my unflagging attention as was F. B. Meyer. I always found him able to bid me draw near and look—often, reluctant and dismayed—into the bare truth of things. Under his preaching I saw my poor pretenses tossed aside, the embroidered robe in which I had striven to drape my leanness torn from me; yet always with the prayer that the vision be not withdrawn, until some perfecting work should be wrought within me. Then, with energies renewed, I have set out again, headed toward the other side of London and a new stretch of spiritual pilgrimage, happy in this at least, that I no longer mistook the harbour of refreshment for the goal, nor the quiet hour of welcome that received me in the hour of weariness, for the heavenly city, with its bright mansions and radiant palaces. And yet another thing he was always able to do for me—something best expressed, perhaps, in a brief phrase which, in later days, came to have a tremendous significance unattached to it before the World War. He always gave me a fervent heartfelt desire to "Carry on!"

Of course there were, during the progress of his long and wonderful ministry, certain changes in the outlook and tone of the messages he delivered. Something of the sort was inevitable, unless the man desired to remain hopelessly static and stationary amid a moving world. But from first to last—this much can be confidently asserted—F. B. Meyer was, and remained, an

incorruptible Evangelical. By an Evangelical, I mean, premeditatedly and definitely, one who faithfully follows the teaching of the gospel of salvation and makes living union with a living Christ the core of Christianity, and maintains that this can only be attained by personal repentance and personal faith. The emphasis, in his teaching, is placed on, and in, the Cross—the death of Christ. He may find place, in the foreground of his message, for the postulate that God is a Spirit, and that true worship and authentic service, to be acceptable to Him, must be in spirit and in truth. Nevertheless, the message, itself, is centred in the Cross, leads up to the Cross, and has the Cross for its paramount theme. And such, for sixty long and strenuous years, was F. B. Meyer.

In the commonly accepted sense of the term, F. B. Meyer was not a pulpit orator. Nor was he a scholar as that word is generally used. But he was a scholar in the sense that he read the great books of the language and knew much of the best that had been thought by the thinkers and said by the poets and prophets. And he had outstanding qualities that offset academic lack. He was a saintly, mystical, lovable man. His heart was big enough to feel for all the sufferings and failings of humanity, and he had keen insight into the processes of the human soul. He knew the consolations of religion, and he knew, also, the inspirations of its life. He knew, too, the struggles of the aspiring heart and, vicariously, at least, the adversities of life. Consequently there was a note of tenderness in his voice, that was like the caress of a mother for her child.

His sermons healed the wounds of the heart. There was in his utterances an all-inclusive sympathy that brought all sorts and conditions of men to hear him. His preaching was near, intimate, and personal, and made religion a very real and personal thing. He shed the light of the eternal on the common ways of life, and made the infinite Father accessible to men on the street, in the home, the counting-house, the factory, the store. He made God as real to people as he—winsome, wholesome, hearty—was himself, when he took one's hand in his own warm grasp.

Reference has been made to the influence which Charles Birrell exercised over Meyer, and to his freeing himself therefrom. But this related only to methods of preparation and delivery. The fact is, that Birrell led him to become what, as a preacher, he always remained—an expositor of Holy Scripture. His own account of the matter is as follows:

Mr. Birrell and I were walking home one Sunday evening, after I had preached. "That was quite a good sermon you gave this evening," he said, "but it was a topical sermon, and if you are going to make topical sermons your model, you will presently come to the end of your topics, and where will you be then? I advise you to do as I have done for the last thirty years—become an expositor of Scripture. You will always retain your freshness, and will build up a strong and healthy church." That sentence—I remember the spot where I heard it—distinctly changed my outlook and habit, and, by God's blessing, its effect has moulded my pulpit and literary work, and has

enabled me to sustain my pastorates with perpetual zest and freshness all my days.

There is great need, these days, for such preaching as that which F. B. Meyer gave to his hearers the world over. To a very large extent, expository preaching has been permitted to go out of fashion, and the result is a general impoverishment of the pulpit ministry. If preachers would the more generally follow F. B. Meyer's example, it would be to the profit of their own souls and to the spiritual enrichment of their hearers.

The method he followed was to take a Book of the Bible and closely study it for two or three months—reading it again and again until its central lesson—as, under God, he conceived it—became clear. The next step was to plan out the line of treatment, dividing the book into sections and sub-sections, taking care that each sub-section, whether chapter or paragraph, contained a full-orbed thought. When the whole was surveyed, and divided into its component parts, he sought for what he called the pivot text in each part. This, he held, should be terse and crisp, bright and short, easily remembered and quotable. When the pivot text was chosen, he wove into the fabric of his sermon all the main elements of the related context.

Just as all the objects in the field of vision focus in the lens of the eye [he writes], and, finally, in the minute filament of the optic nerve, so the thoughts, images and suggestions of the

context should pass through the chosen text to the heart of those who gathered to hear.

Among other reasons, F. B. Meyer believed in expository preaching because it saved the preacher from getting into ruts, from the danger of dwelling on one's favourite topics to the exclusion of others equally important. The expositor handles big themes, not mere snippets of truth. Preaching of the expository order ranges over great tracts of truth, through wide areas of life and thought, scaling the lofty heights of the mighty texts of the Word. "In the course of my ministry," Meyer says, "I have found that the old Hebrew prophets would say for me all that I wanted to say on social economics."

This statement carries the more weight when it is recalled that, although F. B. Meyer chose to be an expository preacher, there was not a man in the whole of London, better equipped for preaching "popular" sermons—sermons calculated to attract curious crowds—had he elected to do so. With the possible exception of Silvester Horne—on second thought, not even excepting him—no Free Church minister in the British capital knew so much concerning the throbbing heart-break, gigantic evils, and appalling tragedies of the giant city, as F. B. Meyer. What spectacular subjects could he not have chosen! What sensational sermons might he not have preached! And with what flaming posters announcing them, could he not have plastered the hoardings! What he did, however, was something very different. He broke unto the people—wistfully,

pleadingly, illuminatingly, savingly—the Bread of Life, and they ate, and were abundantly satisfied.

The more carefully we keep to Scripture [he declared], the more of Scripture there is in our sermons, the more we deal with the whole tenor of the Word of God, the more probable it is that we shall supply the Holy Spirit with those arrows which He knows so well how to use, launching them into the hearts of sinners for their conviction, and the more we shall supply Him with the pure milk of the Word for the feeding of babes and the strong meat for the upbuilding of mature character.

To these principles, F. B. Meyer adhered. He knew Whom he believed, and founded his faith on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture, on whose promises he implicitly relied, whose precepts he obeyed, whose records he accepted, and whose prophecies he interpreted as history in advance.

And yet his sermons had in them those qualities that make sermons great. After their own fashion, they were big spiritually, dealing in a masterly way with great themes, while at the same time they were intensely practical, touching life at every point, and illumining the commonest duties with heavenly light. They were also couched in beautiful language—the tongue of fields and forests, brooks and seas. There was a poet in his soul, and his sermons had the glamour of the poet on them, and a fine imagination infused them with a lambent glow. He was a mystic, know-

ing God, not by hearsay, but face to face; yet he made Christ the great elder Brother who walked the streets and sat at tables and broke bread with the sons of men. Furthermore, he was good to look upon. To see him in the pulpit, was an aid to health and helpfulness.

Writing in *The Western Daily Mail*, Principal Thomas Phillips, of the Baptist College, says: "I have heard him preach many times. Sometimes his stuff was great, but, whether great or ordinary, he always 'got it across.' He wove a spell over his audience. I do not think he ever declined an opportunity of service. Not so learned as Dr. Clifford, not so human as Mark Guy Pearse, not so concentrated as Hugh Price Hughes—he was undoubtedly one of the great preachers of the generation."

Richard Brinsley Sheridan once remarked: "I often go to hear Rowland Hill, because his ideas come red-hot from the heart." This word of the famous Irishman expresses, precisely, one of the most important characteristics of good preaching. It expresses, moreover, something that was eminently true of F. B. Meyer. Despite his tranquil method of delivery, no one could listen to him without being made aware of his possession of what somebody once declared to be the secret of Chalmers' power—blood-earnestness. Meyer *felt the truths he uttered*; they warmed his own blood and heart; and they warmed those of his hearers.

As soon as Meyer began to preach, he discovered to a listener what it was that ailed much of the preaching

of his time, and ours—lack of fervour. One recalled—that is, I did—men whose sermons, although almost faultlessly prepared, lost more than half their power by reason of the listless, deliberate method employed in their delivery. Cold sermons, like cold meals, may be carefully even skilfully prepared, but they lack the relish of the warm “spread,” and invite criticism such as that passed on a famous, yet icily academic divine, of whose preaching it was once remarked, that “he gave one a passable meal, as good as he could expect to get—prepared cold.”

But this could never truthfully be said of Dr. Meyer. Men and women, as they gave themselves over to the keen, spiritual exercise of the hallowed hour, came to realize that it was no commonplace business which engaged their attention, but one far from the world of mundane things in which they perforce had to live, and move, and have their being. To be sure, this exaltation of spirit could have been—probably was—induced in some measure by the eminently befitting surroundings—the superlatively reverent environment—yet it was not intrinsically of them. It was an immortal theme that occupied them; they were being initiated into the mysteries of high heaven. The keynote of the experience of every genuine worshipper at a service conducted by this man of God was a “soul-sense,” a realization of the infinite significance of things which brought into active prominence the hidden self, which enveloped the outer man, as it were, in a garment of sweet and solemn worship. Everything—preacher, message, environment, one’s own poignant sense of

association and connection with things eternal—was in fine accord. The atmosphere grew soft and aromatic, as it were, with spiritual odours; one waited for—almost expected to hear—the breathing of lute and viol. The sanctuary became, in very truth, as the secret place of the Most High, shadowed and benisoned by the presence of the Almighty—as none other than the house of God, as the gate of heaven to waiting souls.

I have said that a poet dwelt in F. B. Meyer's soul. It could not have been otherwise. A man that has no poetry has no idealism. The prophet must not only see the naked fact; he must have the visionary power. In some of his moods, Meyer was all poetry. Sometimes he bade his hearers listen as to a wind on a heath, sometimes as to a simple lyric told in cool and cloistral calm. His was a nature whose roots were kept watered, whose branches kept green. And this best of all: Dr. Meyer lived in the high altitudes of his spoken words, and that man is never wrong, whose life is in the light.

And this eminent master of pulpit effectiveness was, always, a great spiritual teacher and guide. Analysis, exegesis, comment, were aimed at assisting men and women to the grasp and assimilation of a Truth that could make them free. This great spiritual impetus, this warmth of sentiment, is precisely what is lacking from the work of the representatives of other schools of Biblical criticism. These as a rule speak of piety, rather than possess unction. Even although we have no specific right to expect it in them, we are kept con-

tinually conscious of a lack of spiritual sentiment, and are kept always reminded that the relations of man to God, and *vice versa*, have been with them a matter of study, but not of personal experience. All this was from Meyer as the poles asunder. Always he conveyed the impression that the truths he taught were the outcome of an experience of the power of God in his own life—an experience which enabled him to say, without hesitation: "This one thing I *know*." The intensity which unified his powers and marked his preaching was created by experience. And so there was never any note of peradventure in his message. In the sum, it amounted to this: "*We have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken.*" Charles H. Spurgeon, who held him in high regard, once remarked: "Meyer preaches as a man who has seen God face to face."

Moreover: he brought the experience of high spiritual attitudes down to the levels of common day. He was not a seer, merely, offering purer and keener lights in return for an evermore arduous effort and sacrifice, but a man who believed that life may be turned to immeasurable beauty by every hand that works and every heart that feels. His achievement was art; and his art, as one explores and strives to analyze it, is always rewarding us with fresh aspects of its charm. Under its stimulus, a soul holding itself ready to hear the call of the Highest learned to perceive much that was hidden from the less expectant. There came to a man an accentuated realization of the Eternal in everything—in himself, in his temporal surroundings, in his fellows. He found himself a partaker of those pure,

spiritual delights which attest progress towards all that is nobler and holier; he found himself having access to a means of grace whereby he could obtain such a quickening of spiritual vision, that twinkling points of heavenly light, hitherto but dimly perceived, reddened into the lustre of perfect day.

A word must be found for the quite exceptional faculty Meyer had when aiming to make it easier going for the faithful yet troubled heart. In this regard, he moved in the freest, clearest atmosphere of any preacher of his time. He stood, as it were, under the arch of a great sky, and beckoned to those of his hearers who stood in shadowed places where tones were grey or spiritual facts obscure, to stand by his side. And he did it all so deftly, so brightly, as to constantly remind one of that sentence of Swift's, which Matthew Arnold made famous—"sweetness and light." I recall the following example: Speaking one evening of the way in which spiritual reality can certify its own presence to the soul, even while many questions regarding it are unanswered by the intellect, he told the following delightful little story, of Thomas E. Brown, who wrote *A Garden is a Lovesome Thing*:

Brown, in one of his little poems, tells us that one bright spring day he was in a pleasant valley in Derbyshire. There he met a little lad and, pointing in its direction, asked the name of a certain hill. Very promptly the lad replied, "Top o' th' hill." "But," said Brown, "hasn't it some other name, such as Kinderscout or Fairbrook Naze?" The boy shook his head. "Top o' th' hill it gets with us," he said simply.

"Yes, yes," insisted the poet. "But hasn't it some other name as well; what did your father call it?" But he could get nothing else out of the child; he saw it was no use trying, and then said to himself that, after all, the lad had a wholesome doctrine.

*"And O, the weary knowledge!
And O, the hearts that fill!
And O, the blessed limit—
Top o' th' hill! Top o' th' hill!"*

There were many things about that hill the boy did not know; but he knew one thing, and nothing could move him from that knowledge. That was his blessed limit. It reminded one of the story of the man born blind, to whom Jesus gave sight. The Pharisees might argue whether Jesus was a sinner or not; they might have this theory, or that; the man who had received his sight had no theory at all. But one thing he knew: that whereas he was blind, now he saw. That was his blessed limit. If one has a blessed limit corresponding to that, in his life, he has strong and assuring ground, no matter what he may happen not to know.

I have said that Meyer preached Christ crucified. He did; but he also preached a risen and glorified Lord. Into the presentation of no theme did he put more heart than into that of an ever-present, all-sufficient Saviour. The same Jesus who suffered in man's behalf, Meyer declared, had carried with Him to the skies a heart that could be touched with a feeling of man's infirmities. By personal experience, He knew what it was to fail, in the world's estimation; to

miss the applause of the multitude; to be hungry, homeless, forlorn and desolate; to be counted by the mass of men, a fanatic and a fool. And out of this knowledge He could enter most intimately and sympathetically into the troubled experiences of all who suffered for the cause of truth, or perhaps—less nobly—because of their own lack of moral initiative, power of will, or spiritual constancy. The failures which men felt most keenly, were, after all, those which lay in themselves, and for even these Christ had a word of comfort and of cheer. Had a man in some crisis proved a coward? Jesus Christ held out the assurance that he could again hold up his head in honour. Had another blundered in a way cruelly to mortify his own self-respect? The Master could give him wisdom for the coming days. Had another man lost a prize which seemed almost in his hand, by some strange aberration of moral sense, or some base betrayal or shameful denial? Christ could take firm hold of such an one, true him up, adjust him to his environment, and help him to be His own disciple again. And what of those whose day was over, who were crippled, and could never again leap like the hart upon the mountains of Bether; who were sick; who knew that, for them, health must be but a memory, who had no more strength for life's combats, or place in its procession? For all such, there was the Master's sweet and blessed invitation, "*Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!*" Such was Christ's triumphant, living power, out of which He could vouchsafe strength to all who, having

fallen by the way, and lying crippled on the edge of things, could but faintly cheer, as the multitude swept by. And, when they came to the dark, swiftly-moving river, which ran across the end of the way, there they would find the Lord of life and death, by whose power they would be enabled to pass over dry-shod, into that sweet and blessed Country, whose shores in sunlight stretch away.

There was one quite significant feature of Dr. Meyer's pulpit ministry which, one supposes, everybody who "sat under him," must have remarked—the brevity of his public prayers. They were always exquisite deliverances, ranging, as it seemed to me, the whole gamut of human need; but they were never long. The following beautiful example is a prayer uttered by Dr. Meyer, one Christmas Sunday, during war-time. It has lain among my press clippings for more than twelve years; but it is still fragrant, redolent of the spirit of a sweet and gentle saint of God:

We pray this morning, O Lord [it runs], for a very definite sense of Thine hallowed Presence. When Thou art with us, our midnight turns to dawn, our dawn to noonday. No road is too long, or heavy, or weary, if Thou art by our side. We come to Thee at this joyous season, but amid our song of rejoicing, there is the wail of a deep complaint. Yet we dare to bring to Thee the world's need and the world's sin, believing that both may be carried into the bosom of the Father—that infinite love can find for us a way out of our entanglements and our sin. May the soldier on the field, the sailor on the deep, the statesman in his

council-chamber and the editor in his office be charged with the true spirit of Christmas, so that it may yet be possible to speak, this Yuletide, with definite and proper meaning, of God's sweet peace on earth, and good-will to men.—Amen.

For many years, F. B. Meyer was specially associated with Keswick, the world-famous institution in the Cumberland hills, where ministers and laymen gather for consecration and deepening of spiritual life. In this relation, he proved himself to be of the greatest value to the British Free Churches. He brought to them, in his preaching, some fresh winds of the Spirit, which was as life-giving as the breezes from the lakes and mountains of Keswick itself. He taught and brought men to realize that what they needed more than anything else was, that Christ should be made to them a living Person, a present Power, and that the old words should be the vehicle of His grace. He declared that spiritual life did not really begin, until it passed beyond a business transaction, and had a mystical element. Meyer caused hundreds of people to feel this, and whereas they thought that they were increased in goods and had need of nothing, he imparted to them a longing, a yearning, a holy dissatisfaction, and they listened to him with dimmed eyes and a sob in the heart.

Then came a certain revision, or modification, of his attitude and outlook. The first announcement of it was in 1902, at Edinburgh, when he definitely adopted the rôle of the Christian social reformer. Some of his Keswick friends, who regarded the polling booth with

aversion, became alarmed and even grieved. But there was no need; Meyer believed in Keswick as much as ever he did, and continued so to do, until the end.

As time went on, he came to hold with the belief that the world was growing worse and that the day was becoming darker. He thought that shortly Christ would come to crown the Church with triumph. It was the business of the Christian minister, therefore, to rescue out of a doomed world as many individual souls as possible. When the number of the elect was complete the end would come. Under the pressure of this idea, Meyer gave himself year after year to rescue work at the prison gates, and to pleading with the people in the open air or from the platform and pulpit, while to the Church, his message was that of Keswick, full consecration and surrender to Christ.

It is certain that the passing years brought no departure from these convictions and beliefs. Indeed, it was his fidelity to them which was the mainstay of his advancement from ministry to ministry, from one usefulness to another. In witness of this, it can be recalled that, in recent years, he was the President and Chairman of the Advent Testimony and Preparation Movement of Great Britain, and, in November, 1917, together with a number of other prominent preachers, issued a remarkable manifesto, declaring that the signs of the times pointed towards the close of "the times of the Gentiles." He took a leading part, moreover, in the great gatherings which assembled in Queen's Hall, in the British capital, during the closing month of that eventful year.

In attempting this very inadequate review of the factors which made Meyer so effective and popular a preacher of the Gospel, I have not forgotten the great part played by his reality and sincerity. He was what he professed to be.

The story is well known, of the man who followed Meyer about [says Dr. Shakespeare] and put his life beneath an almost microscopical examination, but was unable to detect a flaw. I sympathize with that man. I felt that no one could always be so good, so sweet and so full of the milk of human kindness. But after continuous intercourse with him since he became our President [of the English Baptist Union] I attest that he is more and better than even he appears to be. He is a citizen of heaven, and his heaven is here and now, in the constant presence of Christ.

A preacher who is really to move the people to whom he is called to minister—move them, as Meyer did, to high impulse, broad charity, a deep spiritual experience—must himself be one of them, in the fullest sense the term implies. His flock must be for him *one* flock, undivided by any discriminating distinctions, consequent on straitened means or affluent circumstances. He must be the careful, loving shepherd. And those who really knew, assured me, years ago, that such relations existed in the happiest sort of fashion in all the churches to which Meyer ministered. No carping critic, without outraging the last tenet of common justice, could deny his splendid pulpit and platform equipment—voice, manner, power of clear thinking, choice

phrasing, real eloquence, and the rest. But behind all this, and (in a sense) counting for even more than all this, when it came to an appraisal of his ministry, was his possession of something not quite so general among ministers of the Gospel as is commonly supposed. And this "something" was an impeccable, adamant adherence to the principle of absolute equality in church life and organization. Dr. Meyer made no favourites, and brooked none. All members looked alike to him. Yet this unvarying attitude towards each and all was not merely civility, or sterling good temper, or diplomatic courtesy, but the sheer spirit of brotherliness and Christly good-will. At bottom, and at all times, Meyer was a man of the people, of *all* the people, holding to the Jeffersonian *dictum* that men are born equal, or, at any rate, are born men; and as a follower of his Lord, to Paul's sweeping inclusion, that all were one in Christ Jesus.

And so this great veteran of the Cross, this devoted minister of Jesus Christ, continued year after year advancing in influence and spiritual strength, strong in faith, clear in vision, heroic in venture, achieving results of immeasurable value and breadth of range, winning men for the kingdom, strengthening and enheartening believers, bringing forth fruit in his old age, standing firmly in his lot at the end of his days, and passing, at length, from mortal vision, giving as he went, rich and glorious promise of still further growth and usefulness in the ever-expanding joy of his Lord.

A CHRISTIAN CRUSADER

IT is often assumed that a man immersed, in a measure beyond the ordinary run of his fellows, in the things of the spirit, lacks adaptability in mundane affairs. Not seldom this assumption is reared on valid grounds, and we are quite ready to make allowances and offer apologies for such a man and regard them as being fully justified. But F. B. Meyer was a standing refutation of all such classification. He allied himself with every movement, and used every means, through which he deemed God to be working His will in the world. Nothing was common or unclean. Secular and sacred was a meaningless distinction for him. They were just differing aspects of complex Divine Personality. They were opportunities to save and uplift mankind, and he utilized them all. In Leicester first, then in London, he proved himself an ardent social reformer, and strove mightily not only to preach the Gospel of salvation, but to labour for the betterment of physical conditions, and the elimination of elements which were inimical to righteous living and Christian citizenship.

He felt that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and that he was anointed to open prison doors to those who were chained to poverty, to give revelations of beauty to those who were blind to her charms, to lift to the bracing air of freedom those whom tyranny had

crushed, and to preach to the poor the acceptable year of the Lord. Such he understood to be his mission, and resolutely set himself to study the facts of society in all their ugliness and obstinacy, sought out their meaning, and boldly devoted days and nights to the work of displacing grinding poverty by comfort, sordid living by enjoyment, and godlessness by a virile and happy religion. Moreover, he blazed with the passion for public righteousness. The zeal of the Lord's house ate him up, and the hot assiduity and efficiency of the devil almost put him beside himself. But he was saved by his faith, and knowledge, was kindled and cheered both by his inspiration for the just and right, the kind and good, and "for the people, Lord, the people!" Under Christ, these two made up his passion. He certainly believed that social enterprises found the Church's way to God for his generation. He was a true soldier-citizen-saint.

Right from the earliest days of his ministry he desired, as he himself expressed it, to "deal with individual souls." In that sentence you see the man and his religion. He knew that there could be no such a thing as absolute standardization and that to do effective work, he must know the needs and temptations of the individual heart. If he essayed to help John Smith, he must know John Smith's life, and not be content with a general survey of the Smith family the world over. He tells us of the days of his early Leicester ministry; how when passing down London Road he met a long stream of factory operatives hurrying down the wide thoroughfare, in the dinner hour, and said to him-

self: "Shall I ever know these people, or understand them, or win their love?" Recollections rose within him of men who had wielded a mighty influence on these same masses by the force of an eloquence, a brilliance of thought and diction, a clear-headedness and directness of statement of which he felt himself to be destitute. But he had yet to learn that the true way to the heart of a great centre of population, was open to any minister of God eager to use the golden key of kindness, and concentrate his energies to deeds of mercy, the opportunity for which lay all about him, no matter how limited his powers or circumscribed his means and sphere.

In the earlier days of my Leicester ministry [he says] I failed in finding the path which led to the accomplishment of my cherished purpose. There were many reasons for this, the chief of which, perhaps, was a certain ultra-exalted idea of the ministerial office, which restrained me from entering freely into the life of the people, and hedged me about with a reserve that hid my real self. All this, however, in God's good time and way, came to an end when, having resigned by pastorate of Victoria Road Church, I undertook the work which developed at Melbourne Hall, which, from the first, was intended to reach the masses who seemed altogether beyond the ordinary means of grace.

One of the outstanding features of the work Meyer now came to undertake in addition to what, hitherto, had been his interpretation of the work of a minister of the Gospel, was the establishment of the Prison Aid

Society, which came about in the following fashion: A young girl who attended Melbourne Hall came to Mr. Meyer, one day, in deep distress about her father, who was in jail and due to be released on the following morning. She wished the minister to meet her father, at the prison gates, and do his best to save him from the bad associates who would be waiting for him, outside the prison. This Mr. Meyer readily undertook to do; and out of this comparatively trivial incident the whole of the splendid work Mr. Meyer was enabled to do along this line in the town of Leicester, arose.

How often it is [he writes concerning this episode], that, when we are waiting for some great work to do, a little child, as in the legend of St. Christopher, asks us to carry it across the rushing stream; or a tiny act of ministry is required by some servant or neighbour; and this is the rill which broadens, widens and deepens into the mighty river, on which navies float and merchant vessels pass, far up into the land.

Thus was the prison-gate work begun. Mr. Meyer went to the prison each morning, and met the men as they were discharged, and walked with them to a coffee-house with which an arrangement had been made, thus diverting them from the saloon, and the evil company awaiting them. When the prisoners were numerous, the minister had with him one or two discreet and willing helpers.

We located them in a corner of the coffee-house [he relates], where they were screened from the immediate observation of those who came into the

bar, and agreed that we must give them something more substantial than mere bread and butter. It is probable that we there and then instituted the plate of ham, which was in all after days to prove so great an attraction to palates which had been long accustomed to skilly and brown bread. This, with two or three cups of tea, coffee, or cocoa, and as much bread and butter as the hungriest could eat, cost about sixpence per head. Sometimes it seemed that the digestion turned against the richer food, and we gave the breakfast to be taken away in the pocket in the shape of sandwiches.

This work continued during the rest of the time that Meyer ministered in Leicester. As it became known, gifts came for the project from all parts of the community, which enabled this whole-hearted servant of God to meet and take breakfast with more than six thousand discharged prisoners of both sexes, during his stay in the Midland town.

So all comes back to me again as I write [was his word, later], and stirs again the old love for this direct and personal work among the lapsed. I seem now to be called to somewhat other work, but my heart clings to the memory of those dear and blessed days at Leicester prison gate. Their memories will be green in my heart till death. And my earnest advice to all young ministers is—to mix freely with the people; to visit systematically and widely; to study men as well as books; to converse with all classes and conditions of men: always on the alert to learn from some fresh pages of the heart opened to the view of the sympathetic soul.

The success of F. B. Meyer's work among the discharged prisoners was faced with all sorts of difficulties. A man came out of jail resolved to reform. He had made up his mind not to drink or mix with his old mates, and to go straight; and as soon as he had had his breakfast he started out in pursuit of employment. The air was fresh, it was a delight to be free, the man's hopes were high; let him but have work, and all would be well. But the day's search was in vain. He went to his home, or to some shelter for the night; believing that the morrow would bring better fortune. But tomorrow came and went, and many such days, charged of fruitless search. Every door is closed, some rudely and roughly. Want stared the man in the face. His resolution and sense of independence died down. He began to loaf about the streets again, and met with men who never meant to work so long as they could sponge on others, or procure liquor. Thus, in sheer desperation, the man who started well a week before, would be back again in nearly the same position of drink and crime as before.

Just at this time, it was said, unfairly, that a man had to get into jail, before Meyer would do anything for him. Indeed, rumour had it that some men actually committed certain trifling offences, so that, by way of the prison-cell, they might come to the preacher's hands. This appeared to put a premium on crime. Meyer thereupon determined to discover some way by which respectable men, who were out of employment, might be enabled to help themselves. So he proceeded to found his Window-Cleaning Brigade.

I bought a ladder or two, some pails, and leathers, and started one or two men on the job [he writes]. Cards on which my name was printed, which guaranteed their respectability, were left from door to door, to be followed up a day or two after. My friends throughout the town were very kind; and I think that, in many cases, windows were burnished to an extent that was a little out of the ordinary. Thus encouraged, I felt emboldened to try a larger venture, more especially as my ladders were too short to reach upper windows; and, notwithstanding my guarantees of respectability, my friends did not see their way to admit my protégés within their houses. Besides which inducements were held out to me that I could do the large factories of the town at so much a window, if only I had ladders long enough to reach them. The result was that in a short time, at the cost (I almost shudder to say it) of some £20, I found myself possessed of two of the longest ladders in the town of Leicester. I think I can see them now, with my name printed down one side, "Rev. F. B. Meyer's Window-Cleaning Brigade." They were evidently so cumbersome, that when they were brought to the coffee-house one morning, I gave instructions for a special cart to be constructed to carry them; and the whole needed at least four men to push the cart to and fro, and to set the ladders up and move them.

The result of this experiment, as far as employing men who were out of work was concerned, amply justified the expenditure. Mr. Meyer had the satisfaction of employing a large number of men until they secured a less precarious mode of livelihood, an opportunity

which their moving about the town among the manufacturers and private residents afforded. As he was constantly about the streets, the young preacher met different members of his brigade, carrying their ladders and pails. "I have always thought kindly of my people at Melbourne Hall," he wrote, later, "that they were not scandalized at the eminently practical side of their pastor's character."

Of course, in all the splendid work which F. B. Meyer carried on in Leicester, there were many disappointments. Sometimes it would be almost more than he could bear; and he declares that had it not been for the perpetual remembrance of the much patience which his Lord had had with him, and how His love had conquered, he could not have borne the terrible disasters with which some of his most hopeful cases met. A man might go on well for a time, and then break out drinking and undo everything, losing situation, self-respect, clothes—everything. In all such cases it was useless even to seem to lose temper, and berate the delinquent. To do so would have been, perhaps, to drive the tempest-tossed bark from its only haven. Besides, it had to be remembered that conscience had already used its scourge pretty severely. And so Meyer always endeavoured to restrain any feeling of natural resentment, and allowed his protégés to see that their fall had caused him real, personal sorrow.

The grief of the Christian soul for another's sin is a divine alembic for purging out the grosser elements from that other soul. It is in the tears

of Jesus that we best discern the unutterableness of Jerusalem's sin and doom. Love alone will save the world. As it is with God, so, in our measure, it is with us. Our methods and prophesyings and machinery will fail if they are substituted for love. But where holy love is, if it can endure, at last it wins.

Reference to the magnificent work which F. B. Meyer did in London along social reform lines, should, by rights, have found place in this chapter. But it seemed altogether incongruous to separate it from his other activities at Christ Church; so due notice was given it, in Chapter IV. No Christian minister ever did finer work than Meyer, "down Lambeth way." Those who knew that dark part of London in the nineties, knew, also, that the conditions described by Somerset Maugham in *'Liza of Lambeth*, and which shocked London, were, if anything, underdrawn. Meyer attacked these evils with intrepid spirit, and proved himself there, as elsewhere, a dauntless Christian crusader.

THE SERVANT OF HIS TIME

THERE is the whole wide world of difference between the time-server and the man who serves his time. Any one aspiring to be, in any adequate sense, a leader, or teacher of his time, must be a student of all times, past, present, future. No man can read the lesson of today who did not learn his alphabet in the events of yesterday; and he who casts no prescient glance toward the indications of tomorrow will make sad mistakes in his handling of current opportunities. The combined genius of history and of prophecy, alone, can interpret and guide the spirit of the present; and, in order to understand where it is we are, and whither we ought to tend, we must know whence we have come and to what goal the growing indications point. A pitiable spectacle of incompetence is the man who imagines that, in order to serve his own generation, he must cut himself adrift from all considerations of, and reverence for, the past. Of no use to his age is the declared opportunist, who boasts that he never looks more than two weeks ahead, in his manipulation of his affairs. That which is called Today—the child of yesterday, the parent of tomorrow—must be focused in the light of eternity before its meaning can be read, and its needs supplied. But the broader wisdom thus acquired, must spend itself

upon the current hour, or it, too, will become a fatuous, even if academic, ignorance. The man who knows everything about life in Athens, or Rome, or Jerusalem; who can describe the minutest details of ancient civilizations, but who knows nothing of the complicated relations and conditions of modern life; who has never considered how the marvellous growth of resource has intensified old problems and created problems quite new, is of little use to the generation which clothes and feeds him. The crown of all true wisdom is service, and "to serve the present age," a man must be alive to its evils and its possibilities for good, its laughter and its tears.

The man who glorifies past heroisms at the expense of modern fidelity, would have traduced past heroes had he lived in the same age with them. He who cannot see opportunity at his feet, because of his upturned face and dreamy forelook, will probably stumble into his grave without realizing that he has left his cradle. The cynic who sneers at attempts to mend the world is in a fair way to reach a world as incapable as himself of being mended. The pietist who, intent upon his mansion in the skies, is indifferent to the suffering and crime and sin around him, who pays his dollars to a missionary society, but never lifts a finger to change and elevate the conditions under which men live in his own city is not to be argued with: he is to be pitied and denounced. The awful eloquence of Christ against the Pharisees was not intended to be set to dulcet music and sung without a shudder, by their modern descendants. Christ meant every word of it, and the

meaning is neither exhausted, nor inapplicable to the life of this, our own time.

The failure to do the duty of the day assumes various pernicious forms. In one man it takes the shape of regretful and debilitating reminiscences. His heart is in the "good old days." He remembers, or persuades himself that he remembers, what life used to be when he was young, when life was worth living, with always something to be done, and room to do it. Matters, however, are different now. Life is too crowded, too vulgar, too complex. Poetry is gone, and chivalry out of date, and heroism impossible. The individual is lost in the mass; the world has passed out of hand. It is now "every man for himself," and no room is left for service. A man of this sort is blinded by memory. Another man believes there is work to be done, somewhere; and believes himself to be the man to do it—sometime. His dream of great deeds fills him with enthusiasm, but he must bide his time. His years are slipping silently and swiftly away, and still that highly improbable opportunity of an almost impossible heroism draws no nearer. It matters not. He keeps a lookout toward the heroism, and dreams much of high deeds to be wrought. This man is blinded by forecast. Some men, of course, do nothing for their age because they mean their age to do everything for them; while others are deliberately useless because of a settled and cynical unbelief in the value of unselfish work, or of work for the mending of the world. Thus, from one cause or another, men overlook, or underrate the present task. They are

dreamers, idlers, pessimists, in some cases pietists, who despise the world's problems even while they live by the world's problem-making labour.

F. B. Meyer was none of these things. Yet he knew and loved the past and gloried in the lessons taught by the story of ancient days; he looked hopefully, and in fuller measure than most of his fellows, towards the dawning of new and better ones. He was both reminiscent and prophetic. But the claims of his own day and age were all about him, and he addressed himself to their discharge with gravity, dignity, wisdom and an utter disregard for personal comfort or indulgence. In spirit and demeanour, however, he belonged to the Victorian era, exhibiting its benevolent mien, its shy affability, its assured peace without a touch of self-complacency, its unfailing courtesy, its suggestion of reserve of power. In him—as was emphasized at the beginning of these pages—the lamb and the lion were combined. Though naturally sensitive, he was quite fearless in following the dictates of conscience, would stand alone and rejoice to bear obloquy for conscience sake. At the same time, he hesitated not to join himself to good and worthy movements of almost every kind, which had for their objective the glory of God and the welfare of his fellows. In very deed and truth, F. B. Meyer was the servant of his time.

To begin with, he was a great Londoner, and did a noble work for his native city. He held a unique position in her pulpits, and his record, as a social reformer, was as full and as honourable as that of any of her living civic statesmen or County Councillors. He had

a great affection for the great, roaring place, and his public ministry began and ended within its borders. As recorded elsewhere in these pages, he preached his first sermon in Seven Dials, his last, in City Road.

One of the most interesting things in London [he wrote] is the rush from the suburbs into the city in the morning, and the rush back at night. It is like the flow and ebb of the ocean, which sends its waves up the inlets and alcoves of the shore, to withdraw them presently down the sand. Or we may compare it to the expansion and contraction of a great heart pouring forth and calling back again its tides of life.

We love London and are proud of her miles of wharves, her bridges, and historic sites, her churches and palaces, her shrines of art and science and culture, her monuments, parks, and public places, her marvellous machinery for receiving and distributing the news of the world. We are citizens of no mean city, and are eager to do what we may, each in his small sphere, to make her great in the highest and noblest sense that word implies.

The manifold character of Dr. Meyer's service was such, that many phases of it were scarcely known save to those intimately associated with this or the other humanitarian activity. Many organizations and societies were honoured by having him named as president or vice-president. But F. B. Meyer cared nothing for empty titles, and invariably took a keen interest and definite share in the work of every project to which he lent his name, while every effort, for the ad-

vancement of God's kingdom and the uplift of mankind, regardless of whether he, himself, were personally engaged in or not, had his loyal and continued support.

There was his life-long interest in foreign missions, for example. In the early years of his work in London, he evinced a deep concern in the fortunes of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, and remained a devoted helper in the work of the East London Institute, subsequently known as Harley House, for more than thirty years.

How well I remember the time, twenty-eight years ago [writes Mrs. Isabel Guinness, in *The Christian* (London)]. My husband, the late Dr. Harry Guinness, had been very seriously ill, and was ordered away from home. We were able to go away together, as Dr. Meyer took the oversight of everything at Harley House, the, then, headquarters of the Union. He had his rooms there, so that he could, when possible, take prayers in the College of a morning. During the year that Dr. Guinness was away recruiting, and then taking meetings, Dr. Meyer took the entire oversight of the work, and not only so, but gained the hearts of the little children left behind. After the decease of Dr. Guinness, Dr. Meyer again stepped into the breach, and remained, ever since, a constant and most valued helper of the work, by advice, etc., when unable to attend committee meetings regularly, and up to a very short time ago, was a constant helper in the work.

Students at Harley House who, in due course, entered upon various spheres of labour—in particular in

Africa and India—were privileged to hear lectures delivered by F. B. Meyer a generation ago; and to this day there are those who remember his words of wisdom, and are conscious of having received benefit from the culture which he sought to impart.

A generation ago, too, F. B. Meyer laboured with ardour and devotion as a teacher of Sunday school teachers, and for fourteen years, every Saturday afternoon, at the Young Men's Christian Association Branch, 186, Aldersgate-street, he expounded the weekly lesson in such fashion, as enabled men, on the following day, to meet their classes with a message of worth and intelligence such as would render coming to Sunday school an experience of real spiritual value. That is not all, however. The addresses were not designed for teachers only, but presented in such a way as to reach young men and others, and in many cases inquirers heard to their souls' good. The style of address was clear in doctrine and confidential in form; and many young men dated their decision for Christ, and their leading to spheres of work in distant lands, to words spoken by F. B. Meyer thirty years ago in the room on Aldersgate Street.

The name of F. B. Meyer will be associated with Keswick, one supposes, as long as the name endures. The beautifully-situated town of the North country was very dear to his heart, and the loveliness of Skiddaw and Saddleback, of Floating Island and the Falls of Lodore, never ceased to whisper soothingly to his spirit. But for Meyer, as for thousands of others of his fellow-Christians, Keswick meant much more than

lovely natural surroundings and delightful human fellowships. Keswick Convention stood to F. B. Meyer as the place where he got his first glimpse of fully-surrendered service, where he yielded himself obediently to the heavenly vision. Meyer acknowledges that, during the earlier years of his ministry, his service was without power with God or special favour with man. Then there came a time when he saw the emptiness of mere service, and cried to God, at Keswick, to take supreme control of his life, guiding, directing and controlling his every plan. From this time on, God accepted his service, and one of the strongest arguments for the spiritual teaching he continued to present, was the testimony to its efficacy that his own ministry furnished. He entered, heart and soul, into the Keswick movement, and joined himself to those who apprehend uttermost, unconditional surrender, as a necessary preparation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and power. He became a regular speaker on the Keswick platforms, and the ministry he exercised year by year had far-reaching effects. Those who were caught in the high tide of this onrush of heavenly waves were borne to heights of spiritual vision from which they have since refused to come down. Keswick influences kept those high standards in the minds of Meyer and of thousands besides. It is this inward union of the soul with God that suggests the word *saintliness* in F. B. Meyer. In him a naturally religious nature abandoned itself to the Spirit's infilling and overflow, and the permanent work of his life was the public testimony and sign of his apostleship.

At Keswick, for many years, he wielded an influence that was unrivalled. To hear him at a Convention, in the hush of a summer evening, was an experience that one never forgot. He "shone" in every phase of Christian service in which he engaged, but it was in retreats or meetings of the Keswick order in which he delighted most, and was seen at his best. Then occasionally his features took on a radiance which recalled the Mount of Transfiguration and made many a disciple declare it good to be there, as he saw reflected, as from a mirror, the glory of the Lord.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago the Brotherhood Movement was formed in England, and F. B. Meyer was the first national President. He was a great encourager of young men, far more keen to imbue them with his enthusiasm and secure them for the cause, than to enhance his own achievements. And in this he was singularly successful. The Brotherhood grew in numbers and power; men like Harry Jeffs, Tom Sykes, and W. W. Ward, gave their best to its enhancement, and the work it accomplished manifested itself in remarkable fashion during the years that followed. But conspicuous among its greatest traditions and inspirations, stands the early stimulus and propulsion given it by F. B. Meyer.

The Young People's Christian Endeavour Movement owes this devoted servant of God a great debt. He never failed to respond to an appeal of the London Christian Endeavour Federation, and twice occupied the President's chair. Time and again, he took prominent part in Endeavour councils and spoke from its

platforms. "His long experience and venerable age secured him the devotion of every Christian Endeavourer," says Rev. W. A. Ashby, "while his personal magnetism and individual charm won and held their love."

In 1906, Dr. Meyer was elected Chairman of the English Baptist Union, and his year of office was looked forward to with the keenest anticipation among Baptists in every part of the country. Everybody realized that the year would be made memorable by the service the President-elect would render. His itinerating prowess was remembered, and the recollection made it possible to indulge the expectancy that the tireless itinerant would be, at least for one year, at the explicit disposal of the Baptist churches of the country. The President's address was delivered in the City Temple, May 23, 1904, and the congregation that gathered to hear it, filled the historic house of worship to its farthest limits. It was six-thirty when Mr. Meyer rose, and the reception accorded him was magnificent. Cheers echoed and re-echoed round the galleries as if they would never end. The instant the applause ceased he began to read in firm, pleasant, musical tones the address to which Baptists had so long looked forward. There is always a touch of formality on occasions of this sort, when a speaker reads a piece of literature which, as everyone knows, is already in type, and will soon be on sale. But Meyer succeeded, by his graceful gestures, appealing emphasis, and the vibrating emotion of his voice, in giving to the printed pages all the fire and fervour of

an extempore utterance. He omitted a good many passages, especially quotations, and compressed some sentences into half their original length.

Some parts of the address breathed the spirit of lofty poetry, and were heard in a hushed attention [continues *The British Weekly* of contemporary date]. One of these was the dirge of feudalism, which was introduced with a glowing picture of the northern midnight. On his Scandinavian tour Mr. Meyer must have witnessed this spectacle, and the impression he left with us was lovely as a Lapland night. The interest grew steadily till the close. The grace and dignity of the President's manner fitted the nobility of his theme, and his voice proved fully equal to all demand upon it. The latter part of Mr. Meyer's speech was rich in the counsels of practical wisdom. As the galleries emptied, I heard on all hands the remark, "Was it not magnificent?" The address will long be remembered for its consecration and its holy charm, and Mr. Meyer's audience could understand how it is that in America, in Syria, in almost every country of Europe, men have learned to look for his spiritual guidance, and to welcome his presence as that of an apostle passing by.

During his year of office, Mr. Meyer fully satisfied the great expectation, which the Baptists of the country entertained. In his official capacity, he visited cities, towns and villages, and, everywhere, he was greeted with the heartiest welcome. He preached and addressed public gatherings in many centres; he conferred with workers in every field. His tour concluded,

he issued a comprehensive and notable report, and it is interesting to learn of those features of Church life and activity, to which, twenty-five years ago, Mr. Meyer directed attention. The amazing thing about this report is, that it reads like the summary of a survey which might have been taken, say, three months ago, in either England or America. And therein lies its value and appropriateness to consideration in these pages.

During his year of visits, Mr. Meyer found that the general level of preachers and Christian teachers had been lifted; but that there was a fatal lack of conspicuous personalities whose voice would be listened to, in a time of stress; too many ministers were cramped within small and limited spheres.

In every part of the land we have met refined and cultured men, with whom it is one long struggle to make two ends meet [he said]. We have sat in their homes, have detected the symptoms of a pressure which they were too noble to confess, have admired the chivalry and courage which refused to unbare the whole story of need, and have been touched with the heroism of them and their noble wives, who are the saints of the Baptist calendar. The missionary who bears the hardship of foreign service has some compensation in the knowledge that his self-sacrifice is, at least, recognized by his friends in the homeland, but what pen shall ever chronicle the patient, unrecognized, and unrequited sacrifices which are constantly being made by our poorer ministers in town and country?

Mr. Meyer went on to express the question as to whether, under these circumstances, the modern ministry can attract the best material to its ranks. Moreover, the heavy emphasis on church work forced men to slight their sermons. "The machinery of our church life is become almost as intricate as life aboard a man of war," he declared.

The remedies proposed for these ills were the combination of two or three churches into one large plant; the increase of ministerial salaries; the infusion of new blood into the boards of deacons and elders; greater devotion to the pulpit; definite, even dogmatic teaching, and a closer personal walk with God. Familiar as most of these suggestions are, they need to be offered again and again, and the best thing about them is that they put upon both ministers and laymen the responsibility for quickening the life and increasing the efficiency of the church in these, our own, times.

The cause of Free Church unity lay always near to Dr. Meyer's heart, and he looked eagerly for significant developments in this sphere. While never so strenuous an advocate of the movement as Dr. J. H. Shakespeare, yet he stoutly advocated its principles and worked steadily for its advancement.

One of the little subsidiary events in which Meyer had part was his being one of a small committee which arranged the memorable Day of Intercession, which was held on June 25, 1902, the day before what was to have been King Edward's coronation day. Queen's Hall was filled three times, with over seven thousand

souls. Four hundred clergymen and ministers were on the platform, and there was a splendid choir, conducted by the late Mr. Clapperton, the organist at Keswick. Dr. Meyer's delight at the tone, spirit, and greatness of blessing of that gathering was unbounded. It cost over £500 (\$2,000), but the entire amount was provided by collections and sale of programmes. Queen Alexandra was most grateful for a copy of the programme and music, which was specially bound in morocco and presented to her by the conveners.

At the World's Sunday School Convention, held in Zurich in 1912, Mr. Meyer alternated with the Rev. R. Moffat Gautrey in conducting the devotional exercises with which each day's session began. Mr. Gautrey says that Meyer dominated that assembly as no other man did, and the deference paid to him by the representatives of thirty-seven nations demonstrated the widespread affection and confidence with which he was regarded by the Churches of Protestant Christendom.

This Convention was but an incident in F. B. Meyer's unabated interest in Sunday schools. This interest took the form of local participation, national prominence, and international service. He loved the young people with a great love, and strove for their welfare in every conceivable way. In noting this phase of Dr. Meyer's manifold activities, it will be recalled, that, for many years, he expounded the Sunday School Lesson for teachers, week by week, in the columns of *The Christian* (London).

The early years of the twentieth century were great

days in the history of British Nonconformity. They were gallant days—fighting days—and in no period before, nor since that time, can the ranks of the Dissenters in England be said to have stood in closer formation, nor have faced more unflinchingly, the forces to which they were opposed. Most notable of all, perhaps, was the Education struggle, and a brief résumé of the situation which brought about this tremendous agitation in Britain, will be of service to American readers. In 1870, when School Boards were established in England, all schools, the maintenance of which was to be provided by public funds, were to be unsectarian; it was not to be expected that the great body of Nonconformists would be willing to pay rates (taxes) for the teaching of Anglicanism or Romanism. But after the passing of close upon thirty years, the Convocations of Canterbury and York, in 1901, demanded that while remaining under private management and control, voluntary (parochial) schools should be wholly maintained by public funds. As these schools were almost entirely Anglican and Romanist institutions, the rights of Nonconformists which were menaced, in 1870, were again threatened with invasion.

In 1902, Mr. Balfour introduced a Bill into the House of Commons which confirmed the worst fears of the Nonconformists. It proposed to substitute County Councils for School Boards, as the educational authority, to place denominational schools on the public rates (taxes), institute creedal tests for teachers, and provide Anglican chairmen for the local committees of control.

The measure was vigorously opposed by the Nonconformists, who fought it tooth and nail. Meetings of protest were held everywhere, and the enthusiasm of the Dissenters knew no bounds. But, in spite of the most strenuous opposition, the Bill became law, during the parliamentary session of 1902. The following year, the Passive Resistance Movement was set afoot. Free Churchmen were most willing to pay for the instruction of their children, in all that made for good citizenship, but beyond this point, they refused to go. While no organized movement was attempted, and while the question always remained one to be answered in the realm of personal conviction, passive resistance prevailed throughout the land. The Nonconformists refused payment of such rates as were intended, under the meaning and provisions of the new Act, to be devoted to educational purposes, and submitted, readily, to restraint upon their goods and even imprisonment in lieu of payment.

Dr. John Clifford was the recognized leader of the movement, but he had whole-hearted support from nearly all the Free Church leaders, foremost among whom were Meyer, Horne, Guttery, and (through the medium of his journal, *The British Weekly*) Robertson Nicoll. In 1904, Dr. Meyer was elected President of the National Free Church Council and, in his presidential address, he declared that the Education Act violated one of the fundamental principles of the British Constitution—that which stipulated that public moneys should be administered only by public control. “When the people’s purse is requisitioned,” he de-

clared, "the people, themselves, should hold the strings." "Moreover," he went on, "the Free Churchmen of England will not submit to the imposition of any procedure which tends to increase the power, or again set up the rule, of the priest in this fair land."

Meyer was, from the first, a passive resister, and in September, 1904, he was summoned to appear before the Lambeth Borough Court for non-payment of the education rate.

He has never appeared to greater advantage than when he stood before the magistrates [says *The British Monthly*], surrounded by a company of brother ministers and other respected ratepayers, to explain why he was conscientiously bound in this one instance to refuse obedience to the law. He spoke nobly and he looked noble. It was faces such as his which Bellini loved to paint, faces of great doges and churchmen, stamped with asceticism in every line.

In the same year (1904), the introduction of Chinese labour on the South African Rand, under semi-slavery conditions, was approved by the British Government, and championed on the floor of the House of Commons, by Alfred W. Lyttleton, the Colonial Secretary. The matter aroused a tremendous outcry in England, and F. B. Meyer's voice again was heard. In his capacity as official spokesman for the Free Church Council, he raised his voice in continual protest, and, on March 31, 1904, was one of the most effective speakers at what, up to that time, was re-

garded as the greatest out-door demonstration ever held in Hyde Park. There were more than a dozen platforms erected in the Park on that memorable Saturday, with many thousands gathered around each. John Burns had his crowd, and so had Will Steadman; yet neither man, nor any other speaker that day, did quite so well as F. B. Meyer. His audience was made up of a great throng of London artisans, and no public man living knew these chaps better than he. They listened to him breathlessly, and cheered him to the echo. 'Twas a day of great protest, this, roused by the shameful spectacle of the Mother of Parliaments bemeaning herself to become the serving-wench of the greasy plutocrats of Park Lane.

During the agitation which greeted the Licensing Bill, which, in those days, proposed to award compensation to brewers and publicans upon the extinguishing of their licenses, F. B. Meyer stood "once more in the breach." "The public purse must not be allowed to yield a single penny," he declared, "to compensate those who have grown rich by the impoverishment of millions, and 'ennobled' [given titles] by the degradation of their fellow-men."

On July 4, 1910, Jack Johnson, the American negro pugilist, defeated James J. Jeffries, at Reno, Nevada, for the heavyweight boxing championship of the world. The British champion, at that time, was Bombadier Wells, and during the following months, negotiations were entered into by those interested in boxing, to bring the two men together, in London, during the spring of 1911. The match aroused great interest, and

necessary arrangements for holding the contest were proceeded with. Risking any unpopularity which might follow his action, Meyer protested by speech and pen. He received very little definite support from other leaders, but he persisted with his protest, and went right ahead keeping the public mind agitated in regard to what he described as an "animalistic exhibition." In the end, he succeeded in influencing public opinion to such an extent, that the proposed fight between the negro and the Englishman, never took place.

On the death of the Rev. Thomas Law, F. B. Meyer undertook the general secretaryship of the National Free Church Council, and in spite of his advanced years spent his days in pulpits and on platforms and his nights on railroads. "He assumed the office of secretary at a time of crisis, and it is not too much to say that his personal prestige and abounding labours redeemed a difficult situation, and made possible the continuous success in which those who followed him have been enabled to rejoice." In 1920, he was again elected President of the Council—a double honour, which, up to that time, constituted a record.

Reference has been made to Dr. Meyer's share in the formation of the Advent Testimony and Preparation Movement, in 1917. To the platform of this movement he remained steadfast and, when in London, seldom missed attending its meetings. A number of those who stood side by side with him on this matter during the war years, ceased to take anything save a languid interest, in the Advent Movement. But to

the last hour of his life, Dr. Meyer looked faithfully for the coming of his Lord. On March 28, hopeful expectancy was swallowed up in open vision.

Among other movements and organizations with which F. B. Meyer was associated, are the following: The National Young Life Campaign, the Shaftesbury Society, the National Children's Home and Orphanage, and Dr. Barnardo's Homes, and in later life he founded the Homeless Children's Aid and Adoption Society.

And so the years passed, with F. B. Meyer teaching little children to reverence truth and honour, and youth to follow after courage and purity; helping men and women to find in this confusing world the right way, and to walk in it; bringing hope to the despairing and comfort to the sorrowing; striving to make the lilies of peace to grow instead of the blood-red blossoms of hate—all this he did with brace and cheerful heart. But when all this has been fully recorded and duly appreciated, we totally miss F. B. Meyer, if we do not see him as a worker for the salvation and growth of the individual soul. He was an apostle and a prophet, and was sure that he was sent to watch for *souls*; and he judged poverty and wealth, mean streets and open spaces, vice-breeding slums and luxurious mansions according to their effects on the souls of men. His work was spiritual in its aim and tone and results. To record his great contribution to the great movements of his time, to which, by honest conviction, he was drawn, is not enough: we must follow him as, under the urge of the Gospel, for the fear of God and

the glory of Christ—under control of the Holy Spirit—he sought to wean men from the ways of sin and folly, while, by preaching a full-orbed Gospel, he set forth the Saviour as we enjoy Him, made righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, unto His separated people. The advance of years did nothing to quench his enthusiasm, and to the very last he travelled up and down his native country, speaking and preaching and testifying to the wonderful power of the grace of God in heart and life.

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE MESSAGE OF HIS MUSINGS

MANY years ago, F. B. Meyer stated that his work as an author was forced upon him by the need for finding money to maintain the philanthropic agencies he started. He declared, too, that his success came to him as a great surprise, that positively he had no idea that he could write books that would be acceptable, until the public assured him of the fact by the enormous demand they made for his writings. And so he began to give to the world the message of his musings, and during the following ten or twelve years, no writer on religious subjects was more widely read throughout the Christian world than F. B. Meyer. Within this period, he wrote more than forty books, the combined sale of which was enormous, and the influence they exerted, felt in every part of the world. In addition to a large number of tracts and pamphlets he became a regular contributor to two or three religious journals, while occasional letters and articles were contributed frequently to a dozen more. These writings, although chiefly devotional and, as some termed, mystical, were ever fresh and characterized by simplicity of style and felicity of expression. They were, without exception, reverent, thoughtful, discovering to the reader an unsuspected truth and beauty in Holy Scripture, and being the

fairest expressions of his ministry, awakened a thirst for the truth which the study of the Bible alone can slake. Some words of Moody show the high estimate which he placed on Meyer's writing: "Few books are better adapted to instruct and help the Christian believer than those of F. B. Meyer. He is a man 'mighty in the Scriptures,' saturated with Bible facts and truths, and possessed with a yearning desire to help his fellow-men to attain a similar blessedness."

Orderly in plan, cumulative in force, powerful in spiritual persuasiveness, serving as windows of light to the theme he intended them to illustrate, his books continued to maintain the high standard, which, from the very commencement, he set himself to attain. Each new volume brought an increase in the number of his readers, while, at the same time, causing the already vast host of habitual readers to render him gratitude for the continuing help and counsel he afforded them. Ministers, lay preachers, Sunday school teachers, all found his books to be of incalculable help, while young men and women seeking light and guidance in the development of their spiritual life and experience, turned to him by the thousand. And this can be asserted (as it richly deserves to be) with all truthfulness: Meyer's books are as valuable, today, as they were in the day in the which they were written and first published. If this statement be questioned, let the questioner take up Meyer's *Notes and Readings of The Psalms*. He will speedily discover that, in so far as any indication of the date of their authorship can be gathered from what is known as "internal evi-

dence," the book could well have been written during this present year of grace. There is not a touch of staleness in it. Pithy expositions, devout suggestions, brief homiletic outlines, bright apothegms, and spiritual lessons of the highest value, combine to form a beautiful mosaic of religious reflection for the private edification of Christian men and women, such as will puzzle our questioner to equal, anywhere—most certainly, not among the work of any contemporary writer of this later time.

A man may write a volume, or volumes, with little or no purpose, and without definite object, and secure a literary reputation by a circulation to the tune of thousands of copies [says *The Christian* (London)]. Dr. Meyer, however, with a design that was high above the thought of reputation, gave to the world scores of books, large and small, and in every case with a spiritual purpose, and a design making for the greater glory of Christ. Those books, from the heart no less than the pen, were reproduced in many languages in the various Continents, and scattered in millions throughout the world. And with what result? Thousands of men and women were blessed by them: they read and were lightened, in mind as well as heart. Through Dr. Meyer's books many found their way to Christ, and were led into a life of holiness and peace, through truths unfolded with simplicity, and driven home in the power of the Spirit of God.

Dr. Meyer was specially happy in writing Biblical biography. Practically all the content of his books

which deal with this subject, were the fruit of his preaching in settled pastorates. Every single study of a Scriptural character, about which Meyer wrote, had at one time, or other, formed the subject of a sermon, the notes of which he afterwards elaborated and prepared for the press. And these biographies bear mute testimony to the claim of his having been unsurpassed, in recent times, in the faculty of helpfully and interestingly adapted studies of Old Testament heroes and worthies, to modern needs. He refrained, uniformly, from all merely pious moralizings, and revealed himself here, as always, as a preacher and writer of scholarly habits and attainments that had clearly outlined in his mind the lessons which could reasonably be drawn from men of another race, and age, and clime and applied with profit to the men and women of his own day. And over, and through it all, one felt the palpable throb of the fervent heart of a man who believed, with his strongest and clearest convictions, that the plain, simple Gospel of Christ, the atoning Saviour, and the Bible, as the very word of God, were absolutely indispensable to the salvation of the world.

Nor, through the whole of his forty years of incessant writing, did Meyer fail in quality or run dry. I have before me his last book, that is, the last published in America. Its title is *The Call and Challenge of the Unseen*, and is made up, for the most part, of sermons delivered during his last tour. It is packed with fresh, stimulating thought and helpful reflection as rich and suggestive as anything that came from his

pen forty years ago. Here, for example, is an excerpt, taken from a chapter called "The Quiet Heart":

Vision is often misled by wreckers' lights, and judgment apt to be unjust because it seeks its own way and whim instead of the glory of Him who sent it forth. We lay too much stress on expediency and the possible immediate consequences instead of taking the far view, and the fruit of our own wisdom is always bitter. Christ permits us to learn by hard experiences that we may be driven back to the guidance of His good Spirit. The future is not ours, but His! We may never have a future, or, in any event, it may be quite different from what we imagine it is going to be. The sea is very wide; the cross-currents very treacherous; our barque very frail. It is best to take the Pilot on board; then the captain may go down from the bridge and rest. So, don't worry, don't anticipate, don't fear. Don't, like Saul, be precipitate and offer the sacrifice before Samuel arrives. "Sit still, my soul, sit still. Jesus, whom thou hast trusted, will not fail thee. He will not rest until He has finished that which thou hast committed to His care! "

And here is another, taken from the chapter on "The All-Sufficient Christ." Dr. Meyer is discussing the fact, that some Christian men and women sometimes question whether they would ever have known Jesus, had it not been for some urgent needs, thrust upon them by the exigencies of human life.

We are tempted [he goes on to say] in order that we may know things fully and richly by

coming to know their contrasts and opposites. To know light, we must needs know darkness; to know good, we must know evil, not by yielding to it but by resistance. Let us carry that thought further, and question whether the blessed beings in other worlds will ever appreciate the Saviour as we can, who have wintered and summered with Him, during our earthly life. May not this have been in Paul's mind when he said: "I know Him whom I trusted"? He trusted Christ almost before he knew Him; but having travelled with Him for thirty years, he had come to know Him. When in an Alpine village, you engage your guide to take you to the summit of Mont Blanc. He has been recommended as eminently reliable, and you trust him with your life. But during every subsequent hour you are testing him; you see how carefully he picks the path, how strong his arm and keen his eye, how quick he is to notice and prepare against the gathering avalanche. At the end of your sojourn in that mountain village you know him for yourself. Previously you trusted in the word of another, but now, believe in the guide because of your personal experience and knowledge of him. So with our dear Lord; we trust Him at the beginning of life on what we are told, but as the years pass we come to know Him with a certainty which asks no confirmation elsewhere. *My Beloved's mine, and I am His.*

I cannot do better than devote the remainder of this chapter to extracts from Dr. Meyer's own books. They are all heart-moving in their simplicity and perfect naturalness, and form a rich incentive to all who believe as he believed, and serve—in spirit, if not in

measure—as he served, enduring as seeing Him who is invisible.

The Cup of Joy

Some dear Christian people appear to think that God does not mean them to be thoroughly happy; and if they drink their cups of joy, it must be on the sly or with words of apology. Some only drink half; or if they drink all they instil some bitter ingredient of their own, lest the draft should be too delicious. How often we forget that God has given us all things richly to enjoy! And when we are sure that He has given us aught, let us not shrink from taking the cup from His hand. Sometimes we have not because we are too blind to see, or too slow to take the cups which God is preparing for us.

And as we drink let us be sure to *call upon the name of the Lord*. Full often, if we dare to do so, we shall find that the bitter medicine which frightens us has been suddenly changed into the very wine of life. There is an old legend of an ancient cup filled with poison and treacherously placed into the king's hand. He signed the sign of the cross, and named the name of God and it shivered at his feet. So, take the name of God as your test. Name it over the cups which allure you ere you raise them to your lips, be they friendships, schemes, plans, business. That name will either show the adder that lurks in their heart, as in the goblet of the old Egyptian feast, or it will transmute common things to sacramental use, and make ordinary cups like that which we use

at the table of our Lord, when over it have been spoken those memorable words, *This do in remembrance of Me.*

Summer in the Heart

Our faces at fifty, sixty, seventy, tell many tales. They are written over with legends which are hieroglyphics to most, but to which love holds the key. Those grey hairs came in that long absence from each other when the heart was sometimes sick with fear. Those lines about the mouth and eye were the result of that long anxiety over the boy who seemed about to take the wrong turn. Those crow's-feet and wrinkles were left by the awful anxiety of that business crisis. Withered, scarred, bent and old, the watch-case is not in quite the same condition on the golden wedding-day as it was on that day, fifty years before, which it commemorates. But the love is unchanged. And though winter has cast her hoar-frost with lavish hand on the bent head, there is summer—perpetual summer—in the heart.

*“ Yes, 'tis summer in the heart;
Snows may fall and tear-drops start,
But the soul that loves, forever
Keepeth summer in the heart.”*

To the aged couple, as they sit together on the ridge of the hill of life in the summer twilight, what a glimpse there is backward into the vale through which they have travelled together for so many years! They can now trace the way by which they have been led,

and confess that goodness and mercy have followed them all their days. They see where they made mistakes, but these have been forgiven, and the consequences neutralized by the alchemy of the divine grace. They discern the graves over which they bent together, the Ebenezer stones they reared, the dark, dense woods they traversed, and the sunlit eminences on which they stood hand-in-hand amid the gleams of prosperity and success—all live again in their memories which, though dull to recall the impressions of yesterday, are retentive enough for those of the distant past. Live, young people, with the prospect of that review before you; that, when it comes, it may bring you sunny and blessed memories!

“Belovéd, It Is Morn!”

His going forth is prepared as the morning. The spot of the earth's surface on which you live has taken leave of the sunshine, and is plunging farther and farther into the blackness of darkness; as the hour of midnight strikes, you are as far removed as possible from the last gleams of the evening glow; but you are hastening toward the dawn, which awaits you in solemn pomp. Let the lonely night-watcher understand, that at each swing of the pendulum, he is hurrying to meet the smile of the morn which awaits his coming, in preparation of golden clouds and bars of amber light and delicate tints of green and azure.

The morning is *prepared*; it waits; it has been decked by the hand of the Creator to comfort and bless the returning hilltops and seas and flowers and

homes of men. Dare to believe that so God is waiting for you—only follow on. Do not be dismayed by the darkness—follow on. Do not give up heart and hope because the delay is so long—follow on. Do not be wanting through lightness or fickleness—follow on. God will break on thee in all the loveliness of His being; thou shalt see His glory in the face of Jesus; the dawn of a more tender and intimate fellowship is nigh; only follow on till the voice of the herald is heard crying, *Arise, shine; thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*

Having Not Seen, Believe

Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless but believing. I do not suppose that Thomas availed himself of the invitation. It was sufficient to see. Such an act of cold scrutiny would hardly have been compatible with his joyous shout, *My Lord and my God.* Christ's voice and form, omniscience and humility, in taking such trouble to win one to Himself—these were sufficient to convince him, and dispel all doubt.

Ah, Thomas, in that glad outburst of thine, thou reachedst a higher level than all the rest; and thou art not the last man, who has seemed a hopeless and helpless wreck, unable to exercise the faith that seemed so natural to others; but who, after a time, under the teaching of Jesus, has been enabled to assume a position to which none of his associates could aspire!

Because he saw, he believed. Too many wait for

signs and manifestations, for sensible emotion and conviction: but there is a more excellent way—when we do not see, and yet believe. When there is no star on the bosom of night, no chart on the unknown sea, no lover or friend or interpreter of the ways of God; and when, in spite of all, the soul knows Him whom it has believed, and clings to Him though unseen, and reckons that neither life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, can shut out the love of God in Christ. *Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.*

Putting On the Lord Jesus

Put on the Lordship of Jesus. For this cause He died and lived again: that He might be Lord of both the dead and living. Let His authority be supreme, His will and prompting, law.

Put on the humanity of Jesus. From the day when He went back to Nazareth and was subject to His parents, to the day when He pleaded for His murderers on the cross, He presents a lovely example of holy and spotless manhood.

Put on the anointing of Jesus. He is the Christ of God. Never rest till God, who anointed Him as Head, has anointed you the member of His body, and you are a Christian (an anointed one) in deed and in truth.

Then, when the day breaks and the shadows flee forever, when the arch-angel trumpet sounds the reveille to quick and dead, when the clear light of eternity breaks in on this time of illusion and gloom, we shall meet the day without shame or misgiving, and

rise to the life immortal, through Him who liveth and reigneth forevermore in the mystery of the perfect day.

Hope Eternal

Hope in God; from henceforth believe in His love and that He is doing the best possible for each of us. Never go back from this moment. Stand to it, whatever betides, that God has done, is doing, will do, His very best. Refuse to discuss the matter with yourself or with any other. Let this be as absolutely fixed as your trust in the constancy of your closest friend.

Hope in God forevermore. As the years pass they will but deepen and intensify the sense of His trustworthiness. Time can never utter all the depths that await us in God: the tenderness of His sympathy, the closeness of His heart against ours, the delicacy with which His hand wipes away our tears. Thus, as the outer man decays, the inward man will be renewed day by day, and affliction will seem light and momentary compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The Way of the Cross

Remember that somehow suffering rightly borne enriches and helps mankind. The death of Arthur Hallam was the birthday of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. The cloud of insanity that brooded over Cowper gave us, *God Moves in a Mysterious Way*. Milton's blindness taught him to sing of *Holy Light, Offspring of Heaven's Firstborn*. Liszt used to say, "The dear Cross has pressed many songs out of me." And it is

probable that none rightly suffer anywhere without contributing something to the alleviation of human grief, to the triumph of good over evil, of love over hate, and of light over darkness.

The way of the Cross, rightly borne, is the only way to the everlasting light. The path that threads the Garden of Gethsemane, and climbs over the hill of Calvary, alone conducts to the visions of the Easter morning and the glories of the Ascension mount. If we refuse to drink of His cup, or to be baptized with His baptism, or to fill up that which is behind of His sufferings, we cannot expect to share in the joys of His espousals and the ecstasy of His triumph. But if these conditions are fulfilled, we shall not miss one note in the everlasting song, nor one glorious element in the bliss that is possible to men.

"Follow Thou Me"

In the presence of the Lord all curiosity is silenced. Dost thou look into His face and try to read the destiny of some twin soul, asking, "What shall this man do?" Thou wilt get no clear response. It may be because thy request was prompted by some kind of selfish longing. It is not for thee to know, but to be; not to compare thy lot with others, but to be strong and brave and true. All depends upon the Master's will, which is taken and which left, which tarries and which speeds home, which is alive until He come and which passes to meet Him by the shadowed cloisters of death. Our business is to follow Christ.

Let us turn again to earth, with its demands and

sorrows and sins, following Jesus as He goes about doing good, following Him to the ascension mount, following Him in thought and desire to His throne; and, penetrating every mystery, all perplexities, each enshrouding cloud, with the unfaltering conviction of faith let us dare to say, "Though I cannot read His purposes, or distinguish His form, or even hear His voice, I know it is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good."

A Watered Garden

This comparison with a spring suggests *the verdure and beauty of nature*. What a variety of vegetation grows in a dell, in the midst of which a perennial fountain rises, scattering its spray! So, when the spirit is infilled with the Spirit of God, the results react on the whole of our wonderful nature. Our life becomes attuned to the whole world of reality, and therefore of natural beauty.

When the love of Christ indwells, it sheds a radiance on everything. When the burnt-offering begins, the song of the Lord begins also. The quickened life of the spirit involves all our activities and correspondences. We walk again the paths of Paradise, and tread the green sward of Eden. Life becomes sacramental and transfigured. We feel that the new heaven and the new earth have come, and that the tabernacle of God is with men. A true life is a whole life. The excisions are only of the evils which blinded our sight and paralyzed our movements. We understand what is meant by the words: "If any man be in Christ,

there is a new creation; old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new." When the spring arises within, our whole nature becomes a watered garden.

*"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green,
Something shines in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen;*

*"Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with brighter beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His, and He is mine."*

The Life of God

The texts of Holy Scripture that teach Christ's real presence in the believer, are as numerous as spring flowers. *Christ liveth in me. Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? Ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.* The Lord Jesus is in the heart which makes Him welcome, as the steam is in the piston, as the sap is in the branch, as the blood is in the heart, as the life is in the body. It would be impossible for words to describe a more intense spiritual Oneness than that which is here presented to us. The Saviour is in each of us, as the Father is in Him, and we are in Him, and He in God. *Our life is hid with Christ in God.* Therefore we are not only one with Jesus Christ, but through Him we are one with God. *I in them, Thou in Me.* The very life of God is pouring its glorious tides through

us, and would do so more largely if only we were more receptive and obedient. He pours water out of the mouth of the Congo at the rate of 1,000,000 tons per second; and is willing to do marvels as mighty through each believer. And as this life permeates us all alike, it makes us not only one with the blessed God, but one with all who believe, as the blood makes all the members of the body one, and the sap the branches of the tree.

Count on the Afterward

God traverses the dull brown acres with His plough, seaming the yielding earth, that He may be able to cast in the precious grain. Believe that in days of sorrow He is sowing light for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Look forward to the reaping. Anticipate the joy which is set before you, and shall flood your heart with minstrel notes when patience has had her perfect work.

You will live to recognize the wisdom of God's choice for you. You will one day see that the thing you wanted was only second best. You will be surprised to remember that you once nearly broke your heart and spilt the wine of your life, for what would never have satisfied you, if you had caught it, as the child the butterfly or soap-bubble. You will meet again your beloved. You will have again your love. You will become possessed of a depth of character, a breadth of sympathy, a fund of patience, an ability to understand and help others, which, as you lay them at Christ's feet for Him to use, will make you glad that

you were afflicted. You will see God's plan and purpose; you will reap His harvest; you will behold His face.

"Thou Anointest My Head"

The anointing which ye received of Him abideth in you. Food which we have eaten abides in us, and when we are quite unconscious of its presence it is doing its work in building up the fabric of our being. In some such way it must happen that the effect of a mighty spiritual blessing does not pass away with the moment of its first advent to the soul; but it abides. And amid the pressure of daily circumstance and toil and engagement, when the mind seems too set on its necessary work to have leisure for upward springing, then the Spirit will pursue His chosen office of ministering grace and strength within. In other words, we receive benefit from the anointing of the Holy Ghost long after the immediate moment of receiving it; the fragrance still clings about our garments, the mollifying softness still lingers on our face.

Let us never rest satisfied with anything less than that indefinable and sacred grace called "unction." We cannot analyze it or understand why it effects what learning and eloquence fail to accomplish. But we detect it when it is present, we miss it when absent. With this the slightest words strike home to the hearers' hearts as the message of God. Without it the most eloquent sentences are like unfeathered arrows, which fall useless at the archer's feet. Withhold what Thou wilt, O God, but give us the unction—*i. e.*, the anoint-

ing—of the Holy Spirit! *Thou anointest my head with oil. Lord, not my head only, but also my hands and my feet!*

Waters of Rest

It is the scorching hour of an Eastern noon. The air is stifling with fever-heat, and all the landscape is baking in the awful glare. The very stones upon the hills burn the feet that touch them. At such a time woe be to the flock without a shepherd; and to the shepherd who cannot find the blue shade of some great rock, the shelter of some bushy dell, or the rich and luscious pasturage of some lowland vale!

But there is no such failure here. See where the pellucid stream is rolling its tide through the level plain. Higher upward in its bed, when it was starting on its course, it foamed and fretted over its rocky channel, leaped from ledge to ledge, chafed against its restraining banks, and dashed itself into a mass of froth and foam. No sheep would have drank of it then; for the flocks will never drink of turbid or ruffled streams. But now it sweeps quietly onward as if it were asleep—there is hardly a ripple on its face; every flower and tree and sedge, as well as the overhanging banks, is clearly mirrored on its surface, and every stone in its bed may be clearly seen; on its banks the pasture is always green and luxuriant, carpeted in spring by a thousand flowers; the very air is cooled by its refreshing presence, and the ear is charmed by the music of its purling waters. No drought can come where that river flows; and the

flocks, satisfied by browsing on the tender grass, lie down satisfied and at rest.

The Soaring Song

It is very needful for us to invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit to maintain us ever in an attitude of surrender and faith, drawing down into our lives God's constant grace. He is the Spirit of memory, who preserves us in a continual state of recollection, and who prompts us at the hour of temptation, "bringing all things to our remembrance."

And if only we live thus, life will pass on happily and usefully. Its stay will shape itself into a psalm, like that which David, the shepherd and king, sang centuries ago. It may begin with the tale of the shepherd's care for a lost and truant sheep. But it will not stay ever on that level; it will mount and soar and sing near heaven's gate; it will spend its days on the level of those shining table-lands where God Himself is Sun; and it will finally pass into that holy and glorious home circle, each inhabitant of which may affirm, without the least shadow of presumption or of fear, *I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

IX

MOODY OF NORTHFIELD

IN the annals of the first great Moody and Sankey evangelistic mission to Great Britain, the name of F. B. Meyer is linked, inseparably, with that of D. L. Moody. The American evangelist, accompanied by his family and Ira D. Sankey, arrived in Liverpool, June 17, 1873. Their plans were inchoate, uncertain. Indeed, as Moody himself said, God seemed to have closed the doors.

On the evening of his arrival, Moody, while going through his pockets in the Adelphi Hotel, came upon a letter that he had received just before leaving New York, and which he had carried across the Atlantic unopened. The writer was a Mr. Bennett, secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association in the city of York, whom Moody had met in the West, some years before. In his letter, Mr. Bennett informed Moody that he had heard and read with especial interest, the glowing accounts of his (Moody's) successful work among the young men of America, and expressing the hope that, in the event of the evangelist visiting England, he would find his way to York, and speak before the local branch of the Association. Moody immediately telegraphed Bennett, informing him of his arrival, and in response to a reply asking that a date be named for a conference, wired briefly:

"I will be in York tonight." At ten o'clock the same evening, Moody reached the Yorkshire capital, of whose citizens none, except Bennett, had ever laid eyes on the American, and none, save three or four, who were familiar with his name. On the Sunday following, a Congregational pulpit was secured for Moody, and from it the evangelist's first messages were delivered. The attendance was small, and the prevailing attitude towards the newcomers one of aloofness, if not positive disfavour. In the course of a few days, the evangelists went to Meyer, at that time pastor of Priory Street Baptist Chapel, in the city. Here they were received with open arms and accorded the most cordial welcome. And thus it came about, that in F. B. Meyer's church, Moody and Sankey virtually began their triumphant British tour.

The first all-day meeting (later to become so prominent a feature in Moody's programme of activities) held in England, was arranged by the evangelist and Meyer, as the two men walked up and down Cowley Street. It began at eleven, and continued for six hours. The first was an hour of confession and prayer; the second, an hour of praise; the third, was given over to testimony concerning the fulfilment of God's promises in the lives of believers; the fourth, a witness meeting for young converts; during the fifth, a Bible address was delivered by Moody, while the final hour resolved itself into a communion service, conducted by F. B. Meyer, and three other city ministers. The novelty of the service attracted a considerable attendance, and the meeting was voted an unqualified success. Five

weeks of services, held in Meyer's church, followed, and resulted in the professed conversion of several hundred people. From York, Moody and Sankey went to Sunderland, where their meetings were still more largely attended than had been the case at York. What followed is written large in the records of the great evangelistic movement that marked the closing twenty-five years of the nineteenth century.

I have known Mr. Moody ever since a memorable Monday morning in 1873 [Meyer wrote, later]. I can see him now, standing up to lead the first noon prayer-meeting in a small, ill-lit room in Cowley Street, York, little realizing that it was the seed-germ of a mighty harvest, and that a movement was beginning that would culminate in a few months in Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, and ultimately in the Agricultural Hall and the Royal Opera House, London. It was the birth-time of new conceptions of ministry, new methods of work, new inspirations and hopes.

What an inspiration when this great and noble soul first broke into my life! I was a young pastor then, in the old city of York, and bound rather rigidly by the chains of conventionalism. Such had been my training, and such might have been my career. But here was revelation of a new ideal. The first characteristic of Mr. Moody's that struck me was that he was so absolutely unconventional and natural. That a piece of work had generally been done after a certain method would probably be the reason why he would set about it in some fresh and unexpected way. That the new method startled people was the greater

reason for continuing with it, if only it drew them to the Gospel. But there was never the slightest approach to irreverence, fanaticism, or extravagance; everything was in perfect accord with a rare common sense, a directness of method, a simplicity and transparency of aim, which were as attractive as they were fruitful in result.

The first ten days of his meetings were only moderately successful, and he gladly accepted my invitation to come to the chapel where I ministered, and there we had a fortnight of most blessed and memorable meetings. The little vestry there—how vividly I remember it!—was the scene of our long and earnest prayers as we knelt around the leather-covered table in the middle of the room. Two Presbyterian students, from Dr. McKay's church in Hull, brothers, often used to pray with us, and I remember that Mr. Moody, at the great Free Trade Hall, Manchester, referred to that little room as the fountain from which the river of blessing for the whole country had sprung.

Many recollections of those days come back as I write: How in the midst of tea at home Mr. Moody suddenly felt that he should preach his afterward famous sermon on Heaven, and started off on a three miles' walk to fetch his notes; how Mr. Sankey went over to see Mr. Rees, of Sunderland, the sailor-preacher, of whom I had spoken to them, and proved his singing powers in the little back parlour of W. D. Longstaff, to the entire satisfaction of both minister and elder; how we had our all-day meeting, the first of its kind in England; and how the fire of God burnt hot in all our hearts. Ah, blessed days! that will live as long as memory endures, days of Heaven, of won-

der, of a new and brilliant constellation in one's sphere, of the beginning of a lifelong devotion to another man, which has only ripened and deepened with every succeeding year.

Not least among the spiritual benefits which followed Moody's visit to York, was that which came to F. B. Meyer. It was during these meetings that he caught a glimpse of a wider, larger life that had been vouchsafed him, hitherto, one in which mere denominationalism had no place, and in which there was but one standard by which to measure men—their devotion to, and knowledge of, the Son of God. From this position he never receded. While willing and ready to devote his energies to those with whom his belief on one great subject necessarily allied him, yet he refused to regard himself as a mere denominationalist, and gloried most in being a member of the one Church, catholic and universal, and the brother of all who loved the Lord in truth and sincerity.

All this was in 1873, when Moody was thirty-six, and Meyer twenty-six. In the years that followed, both men attained to high place in the ranks of those whose lives were wholly consecrated to the proclamation of a Gospel of salvation, through Jesus Christ the Lord. Moody paid a second visit to Great Britain, and proceeded to found his famous East Northfield Conferences. Meyer had become known (at Keswick and elsewhere) as one of the most effective convention speakers then living, and in 1891, Moody invited him to Northfield. His visit was eagerly anticipated by large numbers of people in America, who had come to

know the English preacher, largely through his published writings. Of his first Northfield appearance, one writer, contemporary with those days, wrote in the following strain:

The announcement that Rev. F. B. Meyer, of Regent's Park Chapel, London, would be one of the speakers at the Northfield Conference this year, was received with great satisfaction, as there was a keen desire to see his face and hear his voice. Indeed, the announcement of his coming to Northfield was hailed with joy by many who had been helped and blessed through the ministry of his pen, and he has endeared himself to all as a preacher of rare gifts and graces, mighty in the Scriptures, and full of love and power.

For more than two weeks, Meyer spoke, at least twice daily, to eager congregations. There are those who retain a vivid recollection of his remarkable meetings after the passing of thirty-eight years. "It was a season," says one of them, "during which, without any manner or shadow of doubt, God did, indeed, tabernacle Himself with men.

Great things were expected from his ministry, and the people have not been disappointed [this writer goes on to say]. His words have been singularly adapted to instruct and inspire, to comfort and to help. Those who had known him as a speaker at Mildmay Hall, in London, or at Keswick amid the Cumberland Hills, had regarded him, possibly, as having a mission for

Christians only—as bearing a message dealing specifically with the deepening of the spiritual life—were more than mildly surprised at Northfield. For Mr. Meyer proved himself not only a speaker of singular power on subjects such as those just referred to, but as the proclaimer of a vibrant Gospel message to the unconverted.

His addresses held hundreds spellbound; and at the close of the last meeting, which Mr. Moody left entirely in his hands, a testimony to the power of his words was afforded which none who were present ever desired to forget.

Another witness, hearing Meyer for the first time at this Summer Conference of 1891, writes:

As a preacher, Mr. Meyer ranks very high in the best qualities of power and effectiveness. He is a man “mighty in the Scriptures,” saturated with Bible facts and truths, and possessed with a yearning desire to help others. His keen discernment of the delicate lines and shades of truth, and his wonderful mastery of the spiritual suggestions of the Bible narratives, coupled with his profound knowledge of human nature, enable him to adapt and apply the word of God to the people with rare power and effect. His style is free, unconstrained, and direct, and is marked by great simplicity, united with a certain effective chasteness of diction and action, and with yearning earnestness, suggesting the possession of much reserve power; and all penetrated with a spiritual unction which may be felt, but cannot be described. Of all the great teachers and preachers whom Mr. Moody has brought from afar to his

annual Conferences at Northfield, no one has more thoroughly won all hearts than F. B. Meyer.

How successful this first visit of Mr. Meyer to Northfield really was, is testified to by the fact of Moody's inviting him to give post-conference addresses, a usage which he but seldom followed.

One of Mr. Moody's oft-quoted sayings is: "When I find a good thing I'm after it." So, when he finds a good man, he keeps hold of him. Hence, he prevailed on Mr. Meyer to remain in Northfield and give extra Bible Readings for a week after the Convention closed, and afterwards to visit Chicago for a few days and give the members of his beloved Bible Institute, and all others who desired, the privilege of seeing and hearing this gifted man. "May his work in Chicago," writes Mr. Moody, "be as extraordinary, in power and blessing, as it has been at Northfield."

Not least among Meyer's trophies of Northfield—in some aspects, perhaps the most notable of them all—is the testimony which the late J. Wilbur Chapman gives concerning the English preacher's influence in his life. Writing of it, Dr. Chapman says:

One sentence which he used at Northfield changed the whole tenor of my life and ministry. "If you are not willing to give up everything for Christ," he said, "*are you willing to be made willing?*" I was tremendously moved. The difficulties of years seemed thrust aside. The entire thought was like a new star in the sky of my life, and acting upon Dr. Meyer's suggestion, after having carefully studied the passages in the New

Testament which relate to surrender and to consecration, I gave myself anew and unreservedly to Christ. The result has been rich and fully abiding, and I am living, to this hour, in the enjoyment of blessed privileges, and I shall never be able to adequately express my appreciation of what F. B. Meyer meant in blessing to my whole life and ministry.

What that ministry was, and henceforth became, most of those who are at all likely to read these lines need not be told. Until death came to him, on Christmas Day, 1918, Dr. Chapman proclaimed a Gospel of full salvation, the wide world around. The inspiration of Meyer's message remained with him to the end. He spent himself in full, abandoned service. And, more than most men of his time, he had faith in his fellows. Slight though the possibility was of a man's salvation, it was enough for Dr. Chapman. He would bind up the character which hung by a thread; breathe on the lamp that glimmered and smoked in act to expire. Impregnated by the spirit of his Master, he was hopeful to the last, patient with the worst, making the most of the least, and forever cheering those who were sick, and helpless, and ready to die.

Dr. Meyer continued to go to Northfield, for many years. He loved going, and found the work congenial to him, in every way. He has related many happy reminiscences of his visits to the New England centre, and given a number of fine word-pictures of the charm and beauty of this noted gathering-place of Christian workers. He has described the picturesque village,

with its one long road, shaded on either side by a line of noble elms, "and speaks of the view, always beautiful, stretching up the valley to the northwest with the river gleaming below to the undulating hills on either side, whilst far away in the distance is a range of mountains, the highest in New England."

He has told, too, of his valued friendship with Moody; of the long, earnest conversations had with him, sitting on the verandah of the evangelist's home; of drives with him around Northfield, besides the pleasure of being associated with him in these great summer conventions. And everywhere and always, there was the same perfect sincerity and transparency. "He was a good man for whom one might dare to die."

The death of Dwight L. Moody, December 22, 1899, occasioned a throb of world-wide sorrow. Tributes were paid him in many lands, and hundreds of messages poured in upon his relatives. When his *Biography* came to be compiled, two only, as being representative of the rest, were included, one by George Campbell Morgan, the other by F. B. Meyer:

Moody always reminded me of a mountain, whose abrupt bold front, scarred and furrowed with storm, forbids the tourist [wrote Dr. Meyer]. Yet soft valleys nestle in its mighty embrace, and verdant pastures are watered by the waters that furrow the summit. He was pre-eminently a strong man. His chosen friends were men. He was happiest when giving his famous address on "Sowing and Reaping" to an audience of men only. Strong natures were strongly influenced by him. If a number of his friends were together,

their conversation would inevitably turn on Moody; and if he entered any group, he would at once become its centre, to whom all thoughts and words would turn. All who knew him intimately gave reverence as an uncrowned king, though his crown, like that of the Huns, was of iron.

And then there was the inflexible purpose of the man in all things touching the kingdom of his Lord. Meyer rightfully declares that nothing short of an indomitable resolution and will-power could have conducted the uncultured, uneducated lad from the old shanty in Chicago to the Opera House in London, where royalty waited on his words—rugged, terse, full of mother wit, direct and sharp as a two-edged sword:

For as the man was, so he spoke. Alone, except for the help of God; unlearned, except for what he gained from his incessant study of Scripture and ceaseless observation of character; unassisted by those adventitious circumstances of prepossessing appearance, musical speech, and college education, on which others have climbed to prominence and power, he made his way forward to the front rank of his time, and became one of the strongest religious factors of the world.

Another phase of Moody's character to which Meyer pays tribute is his thorough naturalness. Perhaps it was this that carried him so triumphantly through his career. That a matter had always been dealt with in a certain way, was no reason why Moody should follow the beaten track. On the contrary, it was a reason for

striking out in some novel and unconventional method. He was perfectly unmoved by the quotation of established precedent, utterly indifferent to the question as to whether the course he proposed would bring praise or blame.

When he had mastered all the difficulties of a problem [Dr. Meyer goes on], he would set himself to its solution by the exercise of his own sanctified tact and common sense. There was no limit to his inventiveness, to his rapid appreciation of the difficulties of a situation, or to his naïve solutions. I have often compared his method of handling a perplexity with his driving, for he always went straight before him, over hedges and mounds, up hillsides, through streams, down dikes, over ploughed fields. The last day I was with him at Northfield he drove me from the Conference Hall over ground so irregular and uneven that every moment I expected we should be overturned. But we came out all right at the gate we wanted, and it was certainly the shortest cut. So it was always with him. If he could not untie knots, he would cut them.

At the same time he was absolutely simple and humble. In all the numberless hours I have spent with him he never once manifested the least sign of affectation or drew attention to himself, never alluded to the vast numbers that had attended his meetings, the distinguished persons who had confided their secrets to him, or the enterprises which had originated in his suggestion or been cradled under his care. It seemed as though he had never heard of himself, and knew less of his doings, than the most ordinary reader of the daily press. Not unfrequently I said to

myself, when in his company, Is this the man who can gather, and hold, ten thousand people, by the month, in any of the great cities of the world?

Of Moody's apparent abruptness, Dr. Meyer declared it to be assumed as a protection for a tender and sensitive spirit, something after the manner in which oysters form for themselves strong shells, against the fret of the waves, and the rocks. He had seen many carried away by the adulation of admirers and weakened by the soft caress of the world; he knew that the personal element is apt to intrude between the speaker and the interests of those whom he would fain save for Christ's sake; he was absolutely determined that people should not rest on him, but on the Word of God, to which he was ever pointing them, and he therefore incased himself in the hard shell of an apparently rugged and uncouth manner. It was only when the crowds had gone, and he was able to reveal himself without risk of being misunderstood, that he cast away his reserve and revealed his true and tender self.

If it be asked what was the secret of that power which, in England and in his own country, would hold in rapt attention, for months, ten or fifteen thousand people [Dr. Meyer concludes], the answer must certainly be found in the tenderness and compassion of his nature. That he could tell a good story, call forth ripples of laughter by the touch of quaint humour, narrate Bible stories as though he were personally acquainted with the actors or had witnessed the occurrence in his

travels, were as the small dust of the balance, compared to the pathos which trembled in his voice and moved vast audiences to tears. His power was that of the heart rather than of the head. Whilst he was speaking his hand was on the pulse, he was counting heart-throbs, and touching those deep elemental emotions of the heart which cluster about mother, father, home, bereavement, heaven.

After Moody's death, Dr. Meyer, together with Dr. Campbell Morgan, engaged in what was known as the Northfield Extension work. The gap left by the death of the great founder was practically unbridgeable, but these two men sought to discharge something of the debt which Britain owed to Moody. They addressed important meetings in various parts of the Union, and gave freely of themselves to still further enlarge and the more effectively establish the work which Moody had begun. Dr. Meyer's itinerary, during the early part of 1901, included meetings held in Richmond, Va.; Atlanta, Ga.; Birmingham, Ala.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; Louisville, Ky.; Cincinnati, O.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Omaha, Neb., and Allegheny, Pa.

Writing in *The Watchman-Examiner*, the Rev. J. Havergal Sheppard recalls some charming recollections of the early visits of Dr. Meyer to Northfield, among which are the following:

Just after my ordination at Pawling, New York [he says], in 1902, he invited me to spend a day with him at Northfield, Massachusetts, he being a member of the council of Dr. Barnardo's Homes,

and I being the first of that group of "old Barnardo boys" who have entered the Baptist ministry. It was during this day that he revealed to me the charm and the challenge of the "Risen Life" as recorded in Col. 3:1-4, penning the precious passage on the back of a photograph of himself, which he presented to me, and which now holds an honoured place in my study. Among the other secret and sacred experiences that he related that day was this: "When I came to Northfield at first I delivered the popular addresses, and the people were saying, 'Have you heard Meyer?' " "Now," he added, "I am delivering the devotional addresses, and Morgan is delivering the more popular messages, and people are asking, 'Have you heard Morgan?' The self-life has been tempting me to jealousy, but I have crucified it by asking all my friends to hear Morgan, for he is really wonderful." "This," he said, "is the only way to become a real overcomer."

Mr. Sheppard tells of another happy day he spent with Dr. and Mrs. Meyer during the meeting of the Baptist World Alliance, in London, in 1905. It was Saturday and Founder's Day of Dr. Barnardo's Homes, and at the Girls Village Home, Barkingside, Essex. Dr. Meyer was one of the speakers. At that time he gave Mr. Sheppard a complimentary set of his *Bible Characters*, with this comment: "These are the tidings over of times of a thirty-years' ministry. When I return from a series of meetings or conferences and I find that I am mentally 'fagged' I pick out a Bible character and discuss it with my people. You would be surprised at how much they enjoy the ex-

perience. I am convinced more and more that our people like expository preaching."

I had the joy of hearing him again last summer in Philadelphia [Mr. Sheppard says]. Although he was too weak to stand, and had to sit on a stool in the pulpit, his message was as marvellous and his face as charmingly Christlike as in his younger years. He talked to me of my old benefactor, saying: "Dear Barnardo, what a dear chap he was, what a splendid Irishman; it will not be long now until we meet again." I believe, very sincerely, that many among us are better men and ministers because we knew Dr. Meyer through his saintly life, or through the spiritual product of his pen. He possessed that rare quality of pious personality that impressed you with the mystic more than the minister, the saint than the scholar, the priest than the prophet. He knew how to be great without being grandiloquent, eminent without being egotistic, Christlike without being conceited. His deliverances were devotional rather than didactic. In spite of this his hearers had their faith firmly founded and fixed on the great doctrines of the Christian life.

A short while ago, I had a brief talk with the honoured and well-beloved Dr. John McDowell, Secretary of the Board of National Missions, of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America.

I distinctly remember his first coming to Northfield [said Dr. McDowell]. Mr. Moody regarded his visit, always, as one of the most important events ever associated with the Summer Confer-

ence. Meyer held the people in the hollow of his hand, as he spoke to them of the deeper experiences of the spirit, and led them, as it were, on to the tablelands of the kingdom, where the atmosphere is rarer, and the vision of the Highest is made clearer to the eyes of the soul.

I can tell you, too [Dr. McDowell went on], of a personal incident of those early days, which, while of minor importance, if viewed in relation to the larger things Meyer came to Northfield to do, serves to reflect the fine spirit of the man, and forms, for me, a very precious memory. From early days I have been fond of tennis, and in spite of my physical handicap [as nearly everybody in the religious life of America is aware, Dr. McDowell lost an arm in early life] played a fairly decent game. Dr. Meyer came across to the courts one day, just as I was busy keeping an athletic young opponent at bay, in a rather strenuous tournament match. He watched the game for awhile, and then, being impressed, I suppose, with the physical odds against me, sought an opportunity to say a word. "Young man," he said quietly, "I can't play for you, but I can *pray* for you, and *shall*. So keep your end up, my dear fellow, keep your end up!" You see, Meyer the mystic, was, also, Meyer the man.

Dr. Meyer's association with Northfield was never broken. He continued to minister there from time to time, and of late years, his tie with the New England institution was made the stronger by his contributing to *Record of Christian Work*—the Northfield magazine—a highly valued feature, "Bible Notes for Daily Devotions." This material is still being published,

during the current year; and in it—as always—one may catch the voice of the fervent messenger, urging men and women to understand the signs of the times, to see heavenly obligation in every earthly opportunity, to do the task which plainly lies next to their hand, to serve their own generation in submission to the will of God, as being the highest wisdom, the truest piety, the noblest service.

FROM SEA TO SEA

AS related in the foregoing chapter, F. B. Meyer paid his first visit to America, in 1891. His last was in 1926, when he made an extended tour of the United States and Canada, from Boston to the Rockies, which lasted more than two months. He had planned to return during this present year (1929) but—Nicanor lies dead in his harness.

Thus, for thirty-eight years Meyer came and went, and remained, to the end, the best known and best beloved of visiting British divines. Annual religious gatherings of almost every sort, conventions, interstate and inter-city special efforts, church anniversaries, Sunday school festivals and celebrations, tent-meetings, as well as the ordinary services of the sanctuary were laid under tribute to F. B. Meyer, in all parts of America, for close upon forty years.

What was the secret of F. B. Meyer's unfailing popularity? I am not concerned, at the moment, with the character of the message he brought to the Western world. Every phase of that message has been brought and taught, here in America, by others, none of whom attained a tithe of Meyer's vogue or enjoyed so much as a remnant of the popularity and affection that were his to command. Nor was the secret to be discovered in the fact of his being simple, unassuming, human. There have been other men from Britain, just as un-

affectedly sincere, frank and modest as F. B. Meyer. What was it, then, that so endeared the man to men and women of almost every complexion of religious creed and belief?

It would be idle, I think, to attempt to attribute it to a single quality. Nevertheless, I am quite persuaded that, chiefly, it lay in the fact that he remained what he had always been—an Englishman. Less insular, perhaps, than many of his fellow-countrymen, yet in manner, method and message, essentially and unmistakably British. So far as my limited discernment enabled me to judge, Meyer never assumed or annexed a single American pulpit-mannerism since first visiting this country, thirty-eight years ago. Everywhere he went on this continent, he preached as he had preached at Leicester, at Regent's Park, at Christ Church, without the least attempt to trim his style or alter his method to suit or meet any differentiating conditions, alleged to exist between English and American taste and preference in preaching.

Because of this steadfastness, Dr. Meyer was admired and honoured; for Americans love a man to be himself. It is precisely the same in England. The American who, finding himself located in England, imagines he can win English esteem by sinking his Americanism, knows little of the English. If it be true that they, themselves, conform to nobody, it is equally true that they expect nobody to conform to them. Aping English manners, or paying court to English prejudices, is the very last way in which the citizen of another country may expect to conciliate

English good-will. Above all things else, Britishers value genuineness of character. They look for a man to be himself, and not somebody else. By the same rule, my own experience justifies my declaring, that if a man of another nationality expects to be taken into the heart of the best type of American, he must, also, "to his own heart be true."

It was ever thus with Dr. Meyer. Here was a preacher, possessing everything his American fellow-ministers had in culture and general equipment, and something they had not. And that something is (as I think) almost exclusively distinctive of English preachers. It was not fertility of idea, or quickness of mind alone—although Meyer had these things in wonderfully abundant fashion. It was not merely an almost uncanny facility for the faultless phrase—for the *one* peculiarly and superlatively fitting word, when the use of any of a dozen possible synonyms would have lessened the beauty of the thought it was intended to express and adorn—though in these particulars Meyer was, perhaps, without a peer. It might be called a unique capacity for lambently flinging new light about old texts and themes; but even that would scarcely represent it, completely. Perhaps flexibility is the word I am after—a word which comes nearest to expressing the quality which American star preachers so frequently lack, and English preachers, such as Jowett, Meyer, Campbell Morgan, Charles Brown, J. D. Jones or R. J. Campbell—to name a few of them—so pre-eminently possessed, and still possess. This fact (and fact it is) is all the more surprising because flexibility,

as a national characteristic, is very much more the possession of the average American, than of the average Englishman.

As these pages already have emphasized, F. B. Meyer remained to the end incorruptibly evangelical. I have seen it stated that his preaching made no claim on scholarship or theological erudition; and, of course, the obituary notice in *The Daily Telegraph*, to which reference has been made, carried the implication, that abstract philosophy and the study of metaphysics were, from Dr. Meyer, as the poles asunder. All such crude comment, however, is simply absurd. To be sure, there is a narrow, hidebound, pedantic sense in which something of the sort might be given a valid standing. But to apply it to Meyer—pshaw! Meyer's preaching and teaching never offended real scholarship. Men of authentic academic attainments were content—eager, even—to sit at his feet, and hearken to his word; and no British preacher, or teacher, ever taught the average American preacher half as much, as did F. B. Meyer. Were the assembling of evidence, witnessing to this fact, the only mission of this volume, its every page could be filled to overflowing with extracts from written and spoken testimony, transcripts of which lie scattered about the table at which these lines are being written.

F. B. Meyer never permitted academic considerations to stand between the message he had to deliver and those from whom it was intended to reach and benefit. He paid scant attention to a presentation reflecting the possession of knowledge such as may be,

and often is, acquired by men of otherwise godless and worthless lives. Nor did he for so much as a moment suggest the pitiable spectacle presented by the ultra-modern, who imagines that to serve his day and generation, he must needs cut himself adrift from all consideration of, and reverence for the past. F. B. Meyer never claimed to be anything except an unreserved servant of God. Yet he *was* more—in a mundane sense—very *much* more, amongst other things, both a philosopher and a metaphysician, the London *Telegraph* notwithstanding. For what, after all, is abstract philosophy but reasoned science, considered apart from the tangible and the concrete? And what metaphysics—in Aristotelian phrase, *meta ta physika*, *i. e.*, a study which begins where that of physics ends—but a philosophical quest in pursuing which, a man strives to lay hold on the first principles of knowledge and being? Even the veriest tyro in definitions realizes that all this is just a somewhat involved formula, far more readily understood when described as the study of the life of the spirit and the unending quest of God. And in this dual pursuit it is not too much to say, Meyer spent nine-tenths of his waking hours.

During his American tour of 1921, Dr. Meyer was the chief speaker at Grove City (Penn.) Bible Conference, and made a deep impression on those privileged to hear him. *The Presbyterian Banner*, for September 2, 1921, contained a spirited account of these meetings, and, in addition, printed *A Minister's*

Musings, which dealt specifically with the preaching, personality, and radiating influence of F. B. Meyer.

As the daily preacher at the Grove City Bible Conference [said the writer], Dr. Meyer has revived all these memories and influences of earlier years and has tested them in the light of present day estimates, and the experience has stood the test. There is a scenic beauty along the route which he travels, that the mind carries with it long after the journey and is often refreshed by it in its happy, quiet excursions, when the imagination carries it back to the days of the distant past. Some of the preachers of high imagination are but temporary entertainers and leave no deep influences upon the minds of men. This would never be said of Dr. F. B. Meyer. And the secret of this, I think, is near at hand. With him all roads lead to the Cross of Christ. If one were to ask him where exists the centre of the universe, I am sure he would answer quickly, "Where Jesus is."

At this Conference, Dr. Meyer gave a number of his famous studies of Old Testament characters and worthies. Those of my readers who, anywhere on this continent or in Britain, were so fortunate as to be privileged to hear these addresses, will recall the masterly, magnetic way in which Dr. Meyer delineated the subjects of these spiritual biographies, and gave to his hearers not only suggestions for holy living, but for earnest preaching, and sent those who ministered in Israel back to their flocks, with his burning message

interwoven with the very texture of their future word to those committed to their spiritual care.

Three ministers of the United Presbyterian Church sat at table with me at Grove City [says the correspondent of *The Banner*]. I turned and asked them as a group what in Dr. Meyer impressed them most, and conjointly they replied that his *simplicity*, his *saintliness*, and his *scripturalness* were outstanding characteristics in his life and his preaching. There is order, method, advance, in the racy course pursued by this master of musical sounds, whether he is speaking or writing of heavenly things. The three distinctive features discovered by my ministerial brethren are unquestionably dominant in Dr. Meyer, but the simplicity is touched by a strong art, the saintliness is approachable through its marked wholesomeness, and the scripturalness is free from dogmatism which is narrow and sectarian. However, while there is evident style in the sermons of this British divine, there is little reference to art or literature or philosophy, or even science as she unfolds herself in nature. The Bible interprets the Bible and, like the early apostles, he is ever proving "out of the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ."

The message of Dr. Meyer was highly stimulating to research. It was not at all in the interest of negations but in the interest of positives. He did not spend his time trying to prove that Joseph or Abraham were mere ideas, but rather in letting us see in them, and through them, the foregleams of the Christ whom they set forth dimly, but most truly. I do not presume to discuss the style of Dr. Meyer, though it has always appealed to me

as most attractive in its union of beauty and variety and strength. It gives a living suggestion to a preacher as to how he may use Bible stories in proclaiming Bible truths, and find in the men of the Bible the everlasting prototypes of the human race.

One of the unusual characteristics of F. B. Meyer, as a traveller, was the ease with which he could accommodate himself to circumstances. He learned to economize every moment of his time, and was thus able to accomplish so much. One writer who had the exceptional opportunity afforded him of accompanying Dr. Meyer on a mission which he conducted in America, years back, says that in six weeks thirteen cities were visited, necessitating 3,500 miles of journey, during which time Dr. Meyer made one hundred addresses. Nevertheless, he still had plenty of time to write, and continued to conduct departments in two English weekly religious journals and several articles for a number of other periodicals. Many of these were written on a writing pad held on his knee, with an old-fashioned stylographic pen, while travelling from place to place, or at odd moments between meetings. He learned, as few men have, how to make every moment tell—waiting for a train, upon a journey, between appointments anywhere, everywhere. While others were distracted by disturbing surroundings, he remained unaffected, because he had studied and acquired the faculty of absolutely giving himself to the theme uppermost in his mind; and so, with tablet on knee and pen in hand he prepared copy for his

thoughtful and helpful expositions and inspirational works.

In 1905, Dr. Meyer travelled from Atlanta, Ga., to Los Angeles, Calif., in a Pullman, being four days on the train. This was his first experience of a journey of this mileage and duration, and he wrote an account of it for *The British Weekly* which he called *Four Days on the Train*. It is a charming bit of writing and worthy of finding a place in these memorials, not only because of its interest in showing the sort of genuine work Meyer's pen and knee-pad could turn out, but because of the contrast the picture furnishes between the places through which he passed, as they were twenty-five years ago, and as they appear today.

Before he started, Dr. Meyer regarded the journey as a very formidable business. He reviewed it, afterwards, as being one of the most interesting experiences of his life. It is not necessary to dwell on the first stage of the journey, lying between Atlanta, Ga., and New Orleans. The more interesting portion of the journey lay westward from the latter city, by the Great South Pacific Railway—the Sunset route to the West. He found his fellow-travellers communicative and pleasant, and the pleasure of animated conversation added to the zest of the long journey.

Immediately after starting at noon [he writes] the entire train was taken aboard an immense lighter which, escorted by a power pulley, was transported across the muddy waters of the Mississippi. Then, for most of the afternoon, under brilliant sunshine our track lay through a low-

lying tropical forest, and, presently, through fields, whence the sugar-cane crop had been recently gathered. Thundering along, we were pulled up, suddenly, by the ghastly tidings that a coloured man from one of the adjoining villages had placed himself deliberately in front of the locomotive. What tragedy was behind that lifeless body, which we left at the side of the track, covered by white sheets, borrowed from the Pullman? There was a gorgeous sunset that night, dying the land with glory. But our party felt shocked and depressed, for even as the land smiled in beauty, death had stalked through it and claimed his own.

On Wednesday morning he woke much refreshed, and had his breakfast early. The train stopped over, between seven-thirty and nine, to give the passengers an opportunity to visit San Antonio. Dr. Meyer describes it as being a quaint, historic place—narrow streets, low roofs, flower-embowered houses, a younger sister of New Orleans, and bearing ineffaceable traces of its Spanish origin. Here, too, was the historic Alamo, the first of the mission stations, which the early Franciscan fathers founded in Texas, and Arizona, and California, ending, of course, at San Francisco. The crumbling walls, towers and domes with their long, beautiful lines, commemorated for Dr. Meyer the taste of those brave pioneering padres. San Antonio River, a winding, gently-moving stream, spanned by artistic iron bridges, and bordered with acacia-like trees, added greatly to the beauty of the scene.

The citizens were busily preparing for a fete to be held on the following Friday, in honour of President Roosevelt's visit. It was here, seven years ago, that he raised his famous Rough Riders, for the Cuban War.

For the rest of the entire day we kept on travelling in Texas. Our speed was not great, the recent floods having greatly affected the track. For the most part, Texas is divided in vast ranches, but on either side the line, the land adjacent to the railroad is poor, with a considerable growth of wild cactus, and large tracts of sandy waste. Ranges of ragged mountains, the rock-ribbed backbones of some lost cordillera, now half-buried in sand, but lofty enough for snow to lie in the upper crevasses, jut out from the plain and run parallel, for short distances, with the railroad track. Lean jack-rabbits and coyotes, endeavouring to scrape a scanty living on the straggling grass complete the picture.

In Arizona, through which we now passed, the Government is introducing ostrich farms and date-growing, so that even these unfertile tracts are being placed under contribution to the general prosperity of this wonderful country.

On Thursday morning the party had to put back their watches two hours, and began to go by Pacific time. Dr. Meyer says that he kept one of his watches by Greenwich time, so that he could keep track of the doings of his friends, as he was then eight hours behind the schedule of old England.

We stayed in the border town of El Paso, two hours [he continues], inhabited by a strange

medley of Spaniards, Italians, half-breeds and Americans. It appeared to be a heaven-deserted place. But they tell me that it has improved immensely within the last three years, owing to the crusade which has gone forward against the saloons and houses of ill fame. But there seemed, to me, to be a terrible lack of counter-attraction.

Early on Friday morning, the express reached Fort Yuma, on the border of the Indian Reservation. About twenty of these Indians—the meagre remnants of the vast tribes that once roamed these territories—were at the stations, with bows and arrows and other articles of aboriginal manufacture for sale. Fort Yuma, Dr. Meyer's American travelling companions declared, was the hottest place in the universe.

On leaving the station we crossed the Colorado River, the boundary between Arizona and California. At first, we encountered a barren tract of country known as the wilderness. But it served a useful purpose for us, in preparing, by force of contrast, for the gradual increase of cultivation and beauty. First one noticed the bunches of yellow poppies, the characteristic flower of the State; then the eucalyptus trees and the orchards of cherry and apple in glorious blossom, followed by immense fields of corn, as yet quite green.

But what is that perfume borne through the open windows of the car? Surely, it is unmistakable! Nothing but orange blossoms carries such fragrance. The air is laden with it! I shall never easily forget the first glimpse I had of those

miles of orange-groves, and the bloom, and the sweetness floating on the air, the golden fruit gleaming amid the dark foliage, and towering over all, as mighty screens from chilling blasts, the eternal mountains, crowned with eternal snow. Here, too, were graceful pepper trees, and again more orchards. The owner, apparently, is fearful of a slight frost tonight, and so huge bonfires are lighted to keep up the temperature after the sun has dipped down in the West.

And so, sounding their great engine-bell and passing at grade through pretty and wealthy suburbs, the train made its way slowly into the city of Los Angeles, where Dr. Meyer left it for ten days of meetings arranged by the city pastors.

My closing word [he says] for all who contemplate this trip is: Don't be afraid of the coloured porter; he is, after all, a very ordinary mortal easily squared by a quarter. Be sure to undress when you go to bed, just as you would if you were at home. If you are of the male sex, provide yourself with a safety razor; eat three square meals a day; get into conversation with your fellow-travellers, and throw off your very English reserve.

Nowhere on the planet was F. B. Meyer more popular, more eagerly welcomed, than at Old Tent Evangel, in the city of New York. Of all the international speakers who have been heard, year after year, from the platform of what has, on more than one occasion been called the citadel of orthodox doctrine, none re-

ceived a more cordial welcome from the non-sectarian congregation which gathered there than Dr. Meyer, whose voice had been heard from its platform for more than a quarter of a century.

The reason is not far to seek [says Dr. G. W. McPherson, who was its Superintendent from first to last]. This veteran of the evangelical faith is a man of the people, simple, unassuming and human; a preacher who never employs shoddy methods and who believes that, since the old doctrines have done so much for the evangelization of the world, they are superior to the new theology, which, so far, has accomplished so little.

All the world knows that Dr. Meyer was a man of peace, and that throughout his long and wonderful life, threw all the weight of his great influence against the red ruin of war. Yet the great struggle of 1914-18 found him where all true men of Meyer's calibre *were* found, life-long convictions to the contrary. None was more concerned than he, regarding America's tardy entry into the struggle, and none rejoiced more heartily, when the die was, finally, cast.

We opened the newspapers the other morning [he declared at the time] to discover that our great daughter or sister across the Atlantic has resolved to throw in her lot in this great conflict. The grey walls of St. Paul's have witnessed extraordinary scenes in marriage and burial, in jubilation and humiliation; but probably they have never witnessed a scene which will live more certainly in history than that glorious day when in that his-

toric church the United States of America and Britain entered into a holy compact in the presence of God. We were glad that the United States should enter into the war, because we knew at once that it meant a speedier cessation of this awful strife. In his noble sermon Bishop Brent said that war had been looked upon as a rough game played by kings, but that that delusion was now to be succeeded by the truer view that war was a wild beast that had to be hunted down and killed. We agree with that conclusion, and we are thankful that the accession of the United States hurries up this consummation; more especially as the three great objects of this war, as we understand them, are, first, the rehabilitation of Belgium, and the granting of the right of self-government to all weak and feeble States; secondly, a new emphasis on international relationships and law; and thirdly, a League of Nations that shall make war so difficult as to be almost impossible. Because this war must end war, and the accession of the United States is to bring that conclusion nearer, we thank God in the name of humanity for the determination of that mighty people.

But, in addition to that, we are thankful for the sake of the United States themselves, if I may dare so to put it. It seems to us as though that nation was led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and that the tempter came to them and said, "Sell your soul for gold, fill the temple of mammon with your incense, take as your rule of conduct not self-sacrifice, but self-aggrandizement, fall down and worship my ideals, and all the world shall be yours." And for a little—only for a moment in comparison with the his-

tory of humanity—it seemed as though that great country hesitated. While it was thinking out the profound problem, all the world held its breath and waited anxiously to know the issue.

Then, in words that will live in history as among the most momentous spoken by mortal lips, came the message of President Wilson that put beyond doubt, and made abundantly clear, that the United States stood for honour and freedom and righteousness rather than for self-aggrandizement; and the revelation brought great consolation to the heart of Dr. Meyer.

We, in Great Britain, have been standing on our Mount Moriah [he said], beside our sacrifice, and have seen the fire consume much that we loved. Then, as we looked down the mountain slope, we saw climbing it the embodiment of that great people to which we gave birth, but which has so vastly outgrown her mother. We found presently, standing side by side with us, all the chivalry, all that was beautiful and strong and good in the American people. They were drinking of our cup, they were being baptized with our baptism, they were travailing in the same birth for the same issue, and we knew we were not alone. God was with us; but it was an unspeakable consolation that those who are closest akin to us of all mankind understood the inwardness of the quarrel, the purity of our aims, and threw in their lot for victory by our side.

Dr. Meyer's activities during the momentous years of the World War were such as fell to the lot of all

British pastors, whose flocks were decimated and membership drained by the unceasing demand for men, and more men, to fill the red gaps that daily were being torn in the British front. Hundreds of the men associated with Christ Church—the number, given me, is seven hundred and sixty—were with the colours, and Dr. Meyer's ministry, of course, was to homes and families from which the boys and young husbands were absent, departed, many of them, never to return. Meyer hated war with a deep and fervent hatred; but, then, he loved England, and love—as ever—proved more than conqueror.

THE TIRELESS TRAVELLER

WRITING in *The Inland Voyage*, of one of his French acquaintances, Robert Louis Stevenson says: "Might not this have been a brave African traveller, or one gone to the Indies after Drake? But it is an evil age for the gipsily inclined among men. He who can sit squarest on a three-legged stool, he it is who has the wealth and glory." This present age, however, may be regarded as being a good age for gipsily-inclined preachers (at any rate, for the gatherings they address) when they are men of piety, eloquence, and lovableness of character. Meyer possessed all three qualities in large measure, and it is a fortunate circumstance, for two nations, at least, that he was just a little bit gipsily inclined. One may go still further, and admit frankly, that Meyer was a man of the open road and the rolling sea, a veritable Lavengro among the preachers of his time. He could—he did, year after rolling year—preach six days a week, travel thousands of miles by land and sea, sleep well and soundly on Pullman train or ocean liner, remain immune from the ravages of benzoate of soda and other evils incident to restaurant gastronomy. No matter how long the journey, or how exacting the toll of unforeseen inconveniences, or how oft-repeated the failure of train or boat service, and the like, he, invariably, "came up smiling," none

the worse in health or spirits. And, always, of course, there was that amazingly misleading appearance of his—spare, almost frail, and of the precise type (one would readily expect) to cave in, at the least sign of extra strain—which gave not the faintest suggestion of the physical reserves of endurance and sheer vitality, that were his to command. As late as 1925, Dr. Charles Brown wrote of him:

In a motor tour which I took with Dr. Meyer through South Wales we held fourteen meetings in one day, and the more meetings we held the fresher he seemed to become. He could wear out any ordinary and most extraordinary men. And yet it may be questioned whether he has ever had a real holiday, or played at any athletic game in his life.

For close on to forty years, Meyer was an indefatigable traveller, and always, be it remembered, bent on the King's business. No period of slippered ease awaited him, anywhere, nothing more restful than a full schedule of meetings, often with long distances lying between the points at which they were arranged to be held. Yet the more arduous the trip, the more he seemed to be pleased, and even when circumstances and conditions were pronouncedly adverse, the large probabilities were that, despite the prevailing confusion and discomfort, he had proceeded to make arrangements for a return visit. But by far the strangest, if not the most contradictory, feature of this phase of F. B. Meyer's life and character, was that, although

(apparently) he was never happier than when peregrinating through the world on some evangelical errand, this man, when at home, was one of the most successful pastors of his own, or any other age.

Writing of his many goings to and fro in the world, in later years:

Yes; some very wonderful things have transpired in my many foreign trips. In Bulgaria, the meetings with the pastors; in Constantinople, the visits to Robert College; in St. Petersburg, Finland, and Sweden, the contact with royalty, as well as with great gatherings of Christians. Wonderful journeys through Germany, with Count Bernstorff as my interpreter. Then India, China, the Straits Settlements, the West Indies. In later years, Australia, Canada and, of course, the many never-to-be-forgotten experiences in the United States of America.

It was with his first visit to America, in 1891, that F. B. Meyer began to lift up his eyes towards the world's great harvest-field. From that time onward, he was an international figure in the religious activities of his time. He had already overflowed his denominational lines, and, henceforth, was to do so, nationally, so far as Christian service was concerned. During 1898-9, he visited India and Burma, addressing large gatherings at Poonah, Bombay, Lahore, Agra, Allahabad, Calcutta, Rangoon, and Madras. The Lahore and Allahabad meetings, especially, were greatly appreciated by missionaries on the foreign field, who came from their various stations to listen to an en-

heartening and inspiring message, brought them by one who knew how to talk to preachers, missionaries, and, indeed, to Christian workers in general, with an apt facility such as left him, in this specific sphere of service, without a peer.

On his return, Meyer said that the sight which impressed him most profoundly while in India was the grave of Henry Lawrence. He visited the Residency at Lucknow, where the bullet marks were still to be seen under the wreathing ivy and flowers, and went to the little cemetery and looked at the tombstone, graven with the words chosen by Lawrence himself on his death-bed: "Here lies a man who tried to do his duty."

In the summer of 1901, he accepted an invitation made him by missionaries at Beyrout, to visit Syria, where he spent several supremely happy weeks. He proceeded overland to Marseilles and, at that port, took a French steamer plying the North Mediterranean route. He saw Naples and Athens, and spent a day at the Golden Horn. He passed through the *Ægean* with its classic memories, saw Patmos, and so came into Asia Minor. He conducted an important conference at Brummana, a village seven miles from Beyrout and two thousand four hundred feet above sea level. Here the Friends were carrying on a noble work; they had flourishing schools, a hospital, and a medical mission. Their premises were placed at the disposal of the conference, and Thomas Cook and Son also provided many furnished tents. The conference was attended by two hundred missionaries, both men

and women, almost every one of whom had come from some sacred and historic spot. One was from Hebron, another from Bethlehem, a third from Damascus, and so on.

Mr. Meyer gave, in all, about twenty addresses, which included several delivered at Dr. Bliss' College. The Syrian Protestant College was opened in Beyrout in 1865, with sixteen students. At the time of Meyer's visit, five hundred students were receiving instruction under Dr. Bliss, being trained as doctors, chemists, and merchants. The building stood (as it still stands) on a fine site, overlooking the sea and the long range of the Lebanon mountains.

After the conclusion of these meetings, the party proceeded to Damascus and Baalbec, which were accessible, by train, from Beyrout. During his journeyings in the Levant, he sent some delightful travel-letters to *The Christian*, describing the delights of his tour.

The interest of Damascus is inexhaustible [he wrote]. Its exquisite setting in a dense mass of emerald green; its antiquity, dating far beyond the date of Canaan; its many mosques with their graceful minarets, from which the faithful are called to prayer five times a day, beginning with the grey dawn, "as soon as it is possible to distinguish a black hair from a white;" when the muezzin bids you arise to pray, because prayer is sweeter than sleep; the narrow, crowded streets, with their myriad teeming life, and varied interests; the stately trains of camels, bringing in the produce of the country, or starting

in caravans for distant markets; the bazaars, in which the natives make or display their goods—all is so deeply interesting that you need to do little more than sit at the window of your hotel, or wander quietly through the streets.

It was with difficulty we tore ourselves away from the massive remains, to which Phœnicians, Greeks, Romans, have contributed; for this site was first dedicated to Baal, then to Roman deities and finally by Constantine to Christ. On our return journey we visited the quay where one piece of stone lies, which was cut out and shaped for the building, but never transported thither. It suggested solemn reflections. Oh, that none of us may be left out of our place in the Temple of our Lord. Thank God, however great the difficulties of bringing us thither (and this stone would have demanded the strenuous effort of forty thousand slaves). *Our God is able!*

The religious history of the centuries, as evidenced by the silent, yet eloquent testimony of the great mosque, lived again for the travellers, as they gazed on the wondrous pile arising from the ashes of its fire, standing on the site of the House of Rimmon, and afterwards of a Greek temple, then a Christian church, now a temple of the Prophet. Still on the bronze gates we could discover the form of the communion cup, and on the pediment of an ancient portico read the Christian sentence which has looked down on these centuries of Mohammedanism, *Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom.*

The Pauline associations of the ancient city had, of course, their poignant appeal for Dr. Meyer:

We walked and drove repeatedly in the street

called Straight [he says], which intersects the city from gate to gate, saw the spot where Paul is supposed to have been stricken to the ground, and that at which he is said to have been let down from the walls. From the top of the minaret we saw the entrance to the distant Arabian desert, whither he fled, to commune with himself and his Lord.

And after Damascus, Baalbec:

Words simply fail me to tell of its glory [he admits]. We reached it from Damascus, after four hours on rail, and four in carriages. That ride through the long pass, with Lebanon on our left, was specially interesting, passing by villages, with their cattle, goats, camels, and asses, and the peasants in their picturesque garb. For one who has visited Baalbec it is only necessary to suggest the scene; for one who has not, no description can convey much idea of the extraordinary magnificence or size of the temples of the Sun, of Jupiter, and of Venus. Imagine blocks of stone seventy feet long and fifteen feet high, columns seventy-five feet high in three pieces, the most exquisitely carved cornices and friezes! Only six of the pillars in the Temple of the Sun remain erect—we saw them bathed in the glory of the evening sunset, and the morning glow.

On the homeward voyage, the liner broke down, and had to put into Port Said. This delay enabled Mr. Meyer to see Cairo and the Pyramids, and to pay a visit to Heliopolis, with its hoary educational associations, stretching back to the days of Israel's captivity.

I had no idea [he wrote of this visit] that the cities and inscriptions in Egypt, made the times of Joseph so real. I am really ashamed to have lived fifty-four years, without visiting the country. People sometimes ask how it came about, that Moses knew literature. But I was shown traces of vast libraries—one numbered twenty thousand volumes—which were given to Heliopolis long before the time of Moses. It is only by travel, that one really gets a glimpse of how real, and how widespread, was the culture of ancient races. For example: the American Consul at Jerusalem told me of the discovery of the remains of a circulating library which was in use in the Euphrates valley in the time of Abraham.

This visit to the Near East impressed upon Meyer some pronounced convictions about the future of missionary effort in the lands forming it. Written twenty-eight years ago, these opinions, today, stand justified by the trend and progress of human events; some of them, were they uttered today, would stand regarded as justifiable dicta, supported by prevailing facts and conditions.

Looking back on my journey [he records], I am deeply impressed with the conviction that light is breaking over Bible lands. But I am convinced, also, that effective missionary work (of any volume) will never be done by American or English missionaries. The Arabs have a wise proverb: "An oak can only be felled by a limb of itself." The best work—the work that will yield appreciable harvest—is that of training and educating native Christians for the task of carrying the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen.

These, of course, are words from ante-bellum days. At the time they were uttered, Meyer had no premonition of the years, during the which, the whole of the Near East would be held in the vice-like grip of war, or of the mandates, and projects arising therefrom, in which Occidental nations would have share. Surveyed, today, however, the problems of the Near East reveal nothing which gives to these opinions of F. B. Meyer, just cited, anything but an air of wisdom and sagacious foresight. Whatever of tangible progress is being made in the Levant, is proceeding along lines indicated by his appraisal of the task and those best fitted to undertake it, to the end that, in the areas of its inception, Christ's Gospel may find ample expression and give unto its reapers, in the field, the joy of harvest.

In the early part of 1902, Meyer paid a visit to Russia, and there held a series of conferences. This visit to the Czar's dominions was marked by the tireless traveller's usual unlimited capacity for work and infectious enthusiasm. Within a quarter of an hour after his arrival in St. Petersburg (since become Petrograd and Leningrad), he addressed his first meeting. He passed eleven days in the Russian capital, and delivered addresses at twenty-four scheduled meetings, in addition to speaking at as many more, improvised in drawing-rooms, and at other private receptions. He also visited Dorpat and Revel, spending two nights on trains and the same number of days in teaching and preaching. Two hours after delivering his last address on Russian soil, he was aboard an express,

headed for London, in order to arrive home in time to attend the funeral services arranged in memory of Newman Hall, his predecessor at Christ Church, who had died while Meyer was absent from England.

It will be recalled that, in 1901, Mr. Meyer had intimated to his congregation at Christ Church, of resigning his pastorate in September, 1902. On his return from Russia, however, urgent pressure was brought to bear upon him to allow the question of his resignation to stand over for the time being. To this request he acceded, and remained five years longer. Dr. Arthur T. Pierson was invited to fill Christ Church pulpit what time its pastor fulfilled engagements which, expecting to be free of the cares of his pastorate, he had made in Norway, Sweden, Germany, and the West Indies.

The following year saw Meyer again visiting America, and in 1904 he was appointed President of the National Free Church Council. He carried on a series of all-day meetings in every part of the United Kingdom. His vitality and industry were simply mystifying. Travelling often three nights a week, speaking five hours a day, then hurrying back to his London charge, he gave a magnificent demonstration of what one consecrated servant of God could do, to enlarge the borders and horizon of the Church. In 1906, he was elected President of the Baptist Union. This involved more travelling, more trains by night and platforms by day. Just at this time, F. B. Meyer was at the zenith of his powers. Everywhere he went, he took with him messages of cheer and assurance. A

contemporary account, in *The British Weekly*, describes one of his efforts as follows:

When I reached the Holborn Town Hall at four-fifteen on Tuesday afternoon, the large room was densely crowded, and Mr. Meyer, standing like a Cadi under the shade of a giant palm, was talking to his brethren, in the character of a young man from the country. Well might Charles Brown describe the speech as "clever and wonderful." It danced like a village brook in sunlight. So astonishing as a mere *tour de force* was this "obscure pastor's" appeal to the city ministry, that the hall rang at many points with delighted laughter. An attempt to reproduce it would be like summarizing an essay of Elia.

In 1907, F. B. Meyer closed his ministry at Christ Church with a farewell meeting attended by many leading Nonconformists, while the Established Church was represented by letters of appreciation from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Southwark. Dr. Robert F. Horton characterized Mr. Meyer as "the typical Nonconformist, the most honoured, appreciated and beloved of Free Churchmen in this country." "We are thankful that, while the pastorate is closing, the ministry is not," continued Dr. Horton. "Mr. Meyer is released from Christ Church that he may take the world as his parish."

During the long years of his pastorates, Meyer had made his spirituality and unbounded energy a power in behalf of righteousness, and it was simply the extension of this service that now, liberated from the bur-

den of pastoral work, he should travel as an apostle through the world, carrying with him everywhere the contagion of his personal force and imparting the vitalizing ideas, the social and religious convictions which had become the "master light of all his seeing."

He has now accepted the rôle of an apostle [wrote Dr. Shakespeare]. His mission in a peculiar degree will be catholic and cosmopolitan. In a sense which, perhaps, applies to no other living man, he will have a world-wide cure of souls. Just as Paul said, "I must see Rome also," so Mr. Meyer has gone step by step, advancing to a fresh height of life. I should be sorry if he became a permanent peripatetic, a wandering star. He is still only sixty years of age, and I trust that when he has carried out his tour he will again find a base of operation, and perhaps do a work and exercise an influence which shall transcend even the achievements of the past.

The world tour on which F. B. Meyer now embarked, included visits to such widely-separated countries as Turkey, China, Australia, South Africa and Canada. No detailed account of this journey need be appended. The whole tour may be held to be sufficiently summarized if described as being just two more years of Meyer's wonderful life, like all the rest, crowded from start to close with consecrated and efficient labours. Returning home, he was offered and accepted a call to his old charge at Regent's Park Chapel, and entered on his second pastorate of that flock, which lasted six years. It was while at Regent's

Park, that he took up the additional duties devolving on the Secretaryship of the National Free Church Council, which brought with it any amount of additional work—travelling, platform-speaking, preaching, organizing and arranging.

During the second Regent's Park pastorate, Meyer had some sort of a belated, fleeting vision of a "stop-at-home" sphere of service, and reached the transitory and—for one of his make-up—rather amusing conclusion, that "a permanent pastorate has more influence in the world than itineration, which is only like a passing shower." This he said in all sincerity, of course; but he reckoned without himself—without taking into proper account that imperious wander-lust of his, which brooked no refusal, neither denial, when it elected to make its call.

Similarly when, in 1915, he returned to Christ Church. "My wandering life," he announced, "is now ending; and I have come to my old home again, to spend the last and, I hope, the best days of my life."

But he was most completely mistaken. His travelling days were by no means ended. It yet remained for him to

*"Follow the Romany patteran,
West to the sinking sun,"*

for although he celebrated his pastoral jubilee in 1920, and resigned his active ministry in 1921 to become minister-emeritus, he had still to visit Australia in 1922, Canada and the United States for three months

in 1925, and in 1927, at the age of eighty, he carried through his twelfth American preaching campaign, during which he travelled 15,000 miles in Canada and the United States. It was estimated at this time, also, that during his long and wonderful ministry, Dr. Meyer had preached 16,000 sermons.

SUNSET DAYS

THE early months of 1927, brought to F. B. Meyer one of the happiest experiences of his long and varied life. This was the great gathering of his friends, from far and near, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, at Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, on April 8, 1927, when the church was almost a bower of flowers, and a unique birthday cake, decorated with a model of the church steeple, was presented to Dr. Meyer, together with a portable wireless set. Hundreds of those who had had cause to thank God for His honoured servant's long ministry, had contributed to a birthday gift—eighty pence, eighty three-pences, eighty six-pences, eighty shillings, etc.; and the total was £800 (\$40,000), a cheque for which was presented to him from "those who love him." Speaking with emotion, Dr. Meyer said, in his speech of reply, that he would not think of accepting the money for himself, but he was glad that he had been given the disposal of it. There were the little children who were his special care, and many other societies in which he was interested, which would share in it. This attitude towards money, over which he had absolute personal control, furnished no surprise for any one who knew F. B. Meyer. All his life long, he had been doing the self-same thing—giving back to God and his fellows that



IN THE EVENING OF HIS DAYS

which had been given to him. There are some lines of an old Methodist hymn which run as follows:

*And oh, Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give,*

which could have no special point of application to F. B. Meyer. He rendered the account *here*—strictly and fully, as became a just and faithful steward.

During the tour across Canada—to which reference is made at the conclusion of the previous chapter—Dr. Meyer gave from two to four addresses, daily, for a period of three months. In addition to these meetings, he prepared material for an entire book, kept abreast of his magazine work which was always considerable, wrote an average of a dozen letters a day, and travelled close to ten thousand miles. And at eighty years of age!

Dr. W. C. Poole, Dr. Meyer's successor at Christ Church, Lambeth, crossed the Atlantic with the veteran traveller, on this trip, and, later, spent a month with him addressing conferences in Canada.

The audiences seemed to be pleased in seeing a kind of modern Paul and Timothy on tour [writes Dr. Poole in *The Christian World*]. Dr. Meyer, although reticent and restrained in sharing his profoundest spiritual experiences, had the gracious art of opening windows and allowing intimate friends to get a glimpse of the deeps of his life; or a glowing phrase burning with the hidden splendour of some mighty moment would suggest the rapture of his mystic soul. In communicating

the language of these mystic hours his face shone, and there came a tenderness into his tone which assured one that he had seen the King in His beauty and was reflecting some of the glory.

But the great strain of this long and arduous tour, made serious inroads upon Meyer's physical reserves, and took more out of him than, at the time, he was aware. As a matter of plain fact, it was the burning spirit of the man, that sustained him, and which kept him going, during the two years of life that were to be vouchsafed him. That spirit was as a living flame. But Meyer was sensitive about the matter of advancing weariness, and came as near to getting thoroughly irritated about it as he ever came to be about anything, in the course of his long, equable life. Any suggestion of his being physically not just what he had been, touched him, as we say, "on the raw."

Writing in *The Sunday School Times*, Mr. F. A. Robinson, of Toronto, who accompanied Dr. Meyer on this trip, says that even when, at last, he was well aware that his physical powers were failing, he almost resented help being offered.

Strangers would hurry to assist him when he came to steps or stairs [says Mr. Robinson], but he would invariably withdraw his arm from theirs and the slim figure would become a little more erect. His secretary wrote me that during his last sickness, and to the very end, he would insist on lifting the glass to his lips without aid. But, often, he would link his arm in that of a friend and lean heavily, but he did not wish any sugges-

tion of helplessness to come from others. When we were alone, however, he was grateful for such little attentions as removing his shoes and the arranging of pillows. "Ah, that's better," he would say as he felt for his Greek Testament or one or other of the translations he always carried in his pocket. "I don't know why people are so kind to me."

During 1928, Dr. Meyer kept fairly busy. Not so strenuously engaged, perhaps, as in some former years, but doing more than most ministers of any age, and "managing to keep himself from rusting," as he wrote a friend in December. He visited his beloved Keswick in July, and during the fall, addressed a number of gatherings, and preached continually.

His last public utterance in Brighton,—whence he had gone to preach and teach for more than forty years—was in October, when he gave the closing address at a convention, brought together for the deepening of spiritual life, in the Dome. He spoke for an hour and a quarter, and notwithstanding storm, wind, and a drenching rain, over a thousand people gathered to hear the address, which definitely touched and influenced many hearts.

Just about this time, he was asked by the editor of a journal, which circulates the world over, what message he would like to send to his wide circle of friends?

I am very conscious of my unworthiness and failure [he replied]. I know not where I should stand if it were not for the blood of the Cross and the mediatorship of the Throne. My outlook for

the next world is summed up in the words, "His servants shall serve Him." If I had a hundred lives, they should be at Christ's disposal. In His service is perfect freedom, and I am satisfied that, for me, the best avenue of service was the ministry of His holy Gospel.

In January, 1928, Mrs. Meyer, her husband's loyal and loving helpmeet for fifty-eight years, died at Bournemouth, and Dr. Meyer conducted the funeral service at Boscombe Cemetery. He preceded the casket to the grave, and for the sentence which reads: "Our sister here departed," substituted the words: "Our dear wife, mother, and friend here departed." Finally he stood bareheaded at the graveside, and said, "Farewell, dear one, to the body, but not to the soul." He had been announced to preach at the Wesleyan Central Hall, Bromley, Kent, two days later, but it was hardly expected that he would be able to keep the engagement. But it was one of his chief characteristics, never—unless humanly impossible—to disappoint a congregation. So on the Sunday morning he was at Bromley, with the light of heaven on his face, and spoke with unusual vigour and power, on the words, "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,*" but never once referred to his own recent sorrow and bereavement!

The last public ministry discharged by F. B. Meyer, was on Sunday, February 10, a little more than six weeks prior to his death. On that day, he preached, morning and evening, in Wesley Chapel, City Road, London. Those having a penchant for analogy may

(quite reasonably) discover some exercise for their inclination in the fact of this aged and devoted veteran, making his last public appearance and preaching his last sermon, standing within a few yards of the spot where the dust of John Wesley awaits the quickening of resurrection. Wesley and Meyer had much in common; certainly, since the death of the founder of Methodism, the Christian Church had known no such inveterate, unwearying itinerant as F. B. Meyer. Both men were great "Gospellers," with Meyer, perhaps, having the wider vision of the Gospel's social implications and interpretation; both fought a good fight, both kept the faith, both laboured until past fourscore.

The weather in February was terribly bad—none worse had been seen in London for years—and Dr. Meyer had been unwell for more than a week with a heavy bronchial cold. But he got through the day wonderfully, and preached with all his usual unction and power. His theme, at the morning service, was the Shepherd Psalm—the tens of thousands, throughout the world, he has helped by that message!—and in the evening he preached from these words: "*But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby. . . . And the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity,*" Isaiah 33:21, 24. A truly striking and beautiful text! And who shall say but that, in selecting it, this honoured, long-journeying pilgrim did not feel himself to have reached the Land of Beulah, from whence he caught a

glimpse of that ravishing and delectable Country; in which there is neither curse, nor night, nor sickness, nor any more sea; only the river, the tree, the throne, and the Lamb.

On the following Tuesday, Miss Hames, Dr. Meyer's secretary, took the aged minister to St. Peter's Nursing Home, Streatham, where he remained for a month, and visibly improved in health. But it was now quite evident that the plans he had made for still another visit to this country would have to be abandoned. The heart weakness that followed the bronchial attack compelled him, for the first time in his life, probably, to allow a doctor's orders to interfere with his own projects or concerns. The arrangements for his coming to America in the April of this year were accordingly cancelled.

Contrary to the advice of his physicians, however, Dr. Meyer persisted in journeying from London to Boscombe by ambulance, March 15, and there entered a nursing home. In the course of the following two or three days, he appeared to be on the mend, and began to look forward to being present at a meeting of the Bournemouth Conference Centre, scheduled to be held on Good Friday, March 29, and to taking part in the service. On Saturday, March 23, however, came a startling change for the worse, and before the Sabbath closed, Dr. Meyer knew that, for him, the day was far spent. Like one of his own beloved English twilights, the evening had been long, tranquil, and bathed in a mellow afterglow. But now, the shades of night were falling fast.

On Sunday, Rev. H. S. Gamman, of the Regions

Beyond Missionary Union, called to see him, and found rapidly approaching his appointed end.

You will tell the others that I am going home, a little sooner than I thought [Dr. Meyer remarked]. Then tell them not to talk about the servant but the Saviour, and about His work. I am a sinner [he continued], but I have served. But we have no right to talk about ourselves, and about the wrong we have done, and call ourselves all sorts of names. That has all been dealt with at Calvary; and it is ours to live this side of Calvary, and this side of Pentecost. Every demand on our side, has been met on Christ's side by a perfect supply.

Although growing constantly weaker, he was able, during Sunday and Monday, to dictate an article for the Press, and about thirty letters of farewell. One of these, sent to Pastor D. J. Findlay, of Glasgow, read as follows:

My Dear Findlay and Wife:

To my surprise, I have just been told that my days and hours are numbered. It may be that, before this reaches you, I shall have gone to the Palace. Don't trouble to write. We shall meet in the morning. With much love.

Yours affectionately,

F. B. MEYER.

Throughout Tuesday, the travel-worn pilgrim spoke continually of the final turn of the road, and of the joy he felt at having almost completed the lengthened journey. Glancing down at his open Bible, one who visited

him on this day saw that it was open at the place where these words met the eye: "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.*"

During Wednesday, his strength continued to ebb; yet he ceased not to assure those about him that his coming to an end, filled him with lively satisfaction and great joy. In the course of the day, he asked to have something read to him. "Read me something from the Bible," he said; "something brave and triumphant."

Thursday, March 28, was for F. B. Meyer, the day which, having dawned, will know no end. During the morning, the watchers at his bedside interpreted his half-articulate requests, as being a request for a celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion, and Rev. Trevor H. Lingley, Vicar of Christ Church, Westbourne, a man to whom Dr. Meyer was greatly attached, was sent for. While the office of the holy sacrament was being observed, the dying veteran raised his hand in token of his understanding what was in progress, and that all was well. Shortly afterwards, he lapsed into unconsciousness, and, within the hour, put on immortality and passed tranquilly to where, beyond these voices, there is peace.

The mortal remains of F. B. Meyer were taken, the following day, to London, and, on Easter Sunday, rested in the vestry of Christ Church—the scene of his long ministry. On Tuesday the casket was placed in the chancel, and a long procession of mourners passed the bier. On Wednesday, April 3, the funeral service was held. The great concourse

which gathered, included dignitaries of all Communion, members of Parliament, representatives of great public bodies, secretaries of societies and missions, together with a great throng of everyday folk, to whom Dr. Meyer had been a faithful minister and spiritual father—all combining to furnish an impressive proof of the deep affection in which the aged saint was held. There was an equally impressive array of representatives of the many activities with which he was, himself, closely associated. The Free Church Council was represented by Revs. Thomas Nightingale, Samuel Horton, J. Tolefree Parr, and others; the World's Evangelical Alliance by Talbot Rice and H. M. Gooch; others represented the Baptist Union, Regent's Park College, the China Inland Mission, the Salvation Army, the Church Army, the Alliance of Honour, and many other bodies. Sir Albert Spicer, Rev. F. W. Newland and Rev. James Cregan were among the leading Congregationalists present. Mr. Lloyd George and the Duchy of Cornwall Office also sent representatives, and a group of nurses brought a wreath from the F. B. Meyer Children's Home at Leytonstone.

In point of ceremonial, the funeral service was brief and simple, and followed the appended order: Organ selections: *O Rest in the Lord* (Mendelssohn); *I Know That My Redeemer Liveth* (Handel). Scripture (John 11:25, 26): Dr. W. C. Poole, Minister of Christ Church; Hymn: *For Ever With the Lord*; Prayer: Dr. W. Y. Fullerton; the Lord's Prayer: the Congregation; Scripture Readings (consisting of passages read to Dr. Meyer in his last hours): Dr. Poole;

Hymn: *For All the Saints Who from Their Labours Rest*; Address: Dinsdale T. Young, D.D., Minister of Wesleyan Central Hall, Westminster.

Dr. Young's address was marked throughout by tender feeling and admirable restraint.

This day [he said, in part] our triumphs rise above our mournings. What a preacher our departed brother was! What a passionate evangelist and fervent witness! Nevertheless, we mourn one of the great citizens of modern times—one who wrought nobly for the people, and especially for the poor. He spent himself lavishly and royally for all who needed him most. Something of the passion of the old chivalries blazed within him, and wherever and whenever he saw want, or sorrow, or wrong, he blazed up in holy wrath. Still more, we mourn the man who bore such a wonderful testimony to Christian truth, and in so beautiful a way. In his later years, especially, he was drawn to stand up for the unassailable integrity of the inspired Word; and it was deeply borne in upon him that it is the high privilege of all who love Christ to live an entirely sanctified life. He made Christian holiness attractive and winsome, and, particularly in his closing years, he was led to bear a remarkable witness to the Second Advent. And what shall I say of his wonderful industry? How he toiled! How his faith worked! As is the case with all the choicest saints, he had a delightful sense of humour. Old age meant nothing to him. As he grew older, he grew younger in spirit. He grew old beautifully. His old age was invested with a fragrant youthfulness, and he passed to heaven smilingly. Little

children loved him: everybody loved him. Let us, then, give ourselves into the care and keeping of a Saviour who made Frederick Brotherton Meyer what he was—a veritable saint, and a man of God.

Instead of the customary *Dead March* from “Saul,” the *Hallelujah Chorus* followed the address, the change being in compliance with Dr. Meyer’s personal request. The Benediction having been pronounced by Dr. Fullerton, the casket was borne slowly down the aisle of the great church with which Meyer’s name will ever be associated, the congregation chanting the *Nunc Dimittis*. A large crowd followed the hearse through the London streets to Waterloo Station, and then assembled on the platform, singing hymns until the train departed for Bournemouth.

Carrying umbrellas to shield them from the cold downpour, nearly two thousand people, including members of the Church of England, Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Salvationists and Quakers, paid their last tribute to the greatest Baptist who had died, since the passing of John Clifford.

The mourners included Mrs. Hawkins (sister), the Misses Meyer (sisters), Mrs. Tatam (daughter), Mrs. Beresford, Miss Tatam (grand-daughters), Miss Y. G. Hames (secretary), Sister Margaret (from the Meyer Children’s Home), and thirteen church officers from Christ Church. Representatives of a large number of societies, together with many personal friends, were also present in Boscombe Cemetery.

The mortal remains were enclosed in an unpolished

oak casket mounted with plain brass-ring fittings and engraved breastplate bearing the following inscription:

FREDERICK BROTHERTON MEYER,
Born April 8, 1847,
Fell Asleep March 28, 1929.

The brief service at the graveside was conducted by Rev. Trevor H. Langley, Vicar of Christ Church, Westbourne; Dr. W. C. Poole, Christ Church, London, and Rev. H. S. Gamman, of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union. The Ninetieth Psalm was read, after which *O Blessed Life, the Heart at Rest*, was sung, the hymn having a special fitness for the departed saint:

*O blessed life! heart, mind and soul,
From self-born aims and wishes free,
In all, at one with Deity.
And loyal to the Lord's control.*

After the Benediction, the vacated earthly tenement of the spirit of F. B. Meyer was laid finally to rest in a grave lined with green moss and yellow daffodils, in which also rested that of his beloved wife, who died ten weeks earlier in the year.

On Sunday evening, April 14, a memorial service was held in Christ Church, conducted by Dr. J. D. Jones, of Bournemouth. The great auditorium was packed with a congregation drawn largely from the surrounding neighbourhood.

Watching its dispersal [writes a correspondent

in *The British Weekly*], I saw that there was no unusual rush for cars or 'buses. Various groups, after chatting for a few moments in the vestibule or on the pavement, melted away into the side streets. The building had proved none too large for the great multitude that occupied the area and galleries. I should estimate that about two thousand people must have joined in the service, among them being hundreds of young men.

Before preaching, Dr. Jones read letters of sympathy from his own church at Richmond Hill, Bourne-mouth, and from the Bishops of Winchester and London. The Bishop of London's letter was couched in terms of tender affection. He referred to Dr. Meyer as "My dear old friend," and to his own sense of the loss that the churches had sustained by Dr. Meyer's translation.

He was the champion of every great cause [wrote the Bishop]. Many a letter I have received from him asking me to join him in some crusade. I admired his delightful tact and Christian courtesy. He was a true Christian knight and a great gentleman. I shall always cherish his memory as one of the best men I have ever known.

Dr. Jones took for his text the words of Acts 13:36. "*For David, after he had, in his own generation, served the counsel of God, fell on sleep,*" and paid an eloquent tribute to the life work of his old friend and fellow-labourer in the Lord. In the course of his sermon he related the incident of Henry George, the

American economist's exchange of words with Cardinal Manning. "I love Christ," said George, "because He loved the people." "I love the people because I love Christ," answered the Cardinal quietly. "Such a sentiment," said Dr. Jones, "was true of F. B. Meyer. In the spirit of it, he served the counsel of God—Moffatt has it, 'he served God's purpose'—through more than two generations; and, now, he has fallen on sleep—the rest that remaineth for the servant of God."

In the final act of Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*, we see the travel-stained, battle-fought knight kneel, spent and exhausted, beside the Well of Life, within sight of Mont Salvant, the goal of his life's long journey. Here, he is divested of his harness. As his buckler and greaves are taken from him, a long, seamless robe is revealed, reaching to his feet. When his casque is removed, the flowing locks, the love-filled eyes and well-known features, of the Son of Man are discovered—the image of Christ, formed in the faithful warrior, during a long life-time of conflict and victory, the hidden Man of the Heart, made manifest amid the splendours of Easter Morning, and the singing of the birds of spring!

A FAR-FLUNG MEMORY

DURING the whole of the brief period covered by the work of compiling this narrative, I kept casting about, among the many poignant and precious memories I retain of F. B. Meyer, for one which might serve as a fitting note with which to make an end. I thought, for example, of the first time I heard him preach, in the city of London, from these words: "*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father. . . . He will testify of Me,*" John 15:26; and of the last, two years ago, in New York City; when his text was: "*For this cause came I unto this hour,*" John 12:27; and I remembered that more than a full generation lay between. Finally, I reached the conclusion that it should take the form of a sort of reconstructed word-picture of the man, as I saw and heard him, one summer Sabbath evening, more than a quarter of a century ago, as he bade farewell to his church and congregation, ere departing for America, on the coming morrow.

As I crossed Lambeth Bridge, the sun, on his way to the West, was turning the turgid, muddy river into a channel of molten gold. The ancient trees in Lambeth Palace grounds were flinging elongated shadows across the surrounding greensward, what time the

evening sunshine, piercing through the interstices of their leafy branches, transformed the grey stones of the courtyard into a mosaic of lustrous topaz and gleaming amber.

When I arrived at Christ Church, I find it crowded with a congregation that quite filled the ground-area and the galleries. The man in the pulpit—a tense, slender figure—evinces no signs of strain or weariness, such as might have been expected to show upon him, after the exacting duties of the long, strenuous day. I knew that, since seven of the morn, he had been incessantly labouring, and, now, it was towards evening, and the day far spent. But for Dr. Meyer this hour of the long English twilight has its clear, compelling duty, which waited to be duly fulfilled ere the curtains of the night were fully drawn.

For the third time, this glorious summer Sunday, the calm, magnetic voice of Meyer is heard—exhorting, pleading, extolling his Lord; for the third time, a congregation of Londoners hang expectant upon his every word.

It is St. Paul's immortal love chapter—the thirteenth of First Corinthians—to which Dr. Meyer directs the attention of his hearers in this hallowed hour. He begins by tracing the striking gradation—each step rising above another—in which St. Paul enumerates those things which those who are called Christian, and usually accounted as such, appear to really imagine will atone for the absence of brotherly love. He goes on to show how the great apostle, beginning with the quality least in value—that of *talking well*—advances

therefrom, step by step, until he comes to the highest of all. A step above eloquence, is knowledge with faith, a step above *that*; good works are a step above faith; suffering for righteousness, above good works. Than this, naught is higher, save only Christian love—love for one's fellows, flowing out from a love for God.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels"—the highest eloquence, whether of private conversation, or public ministration—the brightest talent, either for preaching or prayer—if they be not joined to humble, patient love, will bring no man one step nearer heaven.

"Though I have the gift of prophecy"—of foretelling future events, which no ordinary human can foresee; *"though I understand all mysteries"*—of nature, of providence and the Word of God; though a man possess knowledge of all things, human and divine, if he have not humility, gentleness, love, he is as nothing in the sight of God.

"And though I have all faith"—if this faith work not by love; if it bring not forth lowliness, meekness, it availeth nothing. All faith that is, that was, that will be, which is apart from a tender benevolence of spirit is not the faith of a Christian, and will stand a man in no stead, before the face of God.

The great congregation sit intently watching and listening to the preacher—immovable, fascinated, held by magnetic power. Night comes on apace. The summer gloaming gives place to gathering darkness; daylight dies. The church is not illuminated, but

lights are now turned on, above the preacher's head and behind the pulpit, silhouetting his form against the brightened background. The tranquil, expressive features are no longer plainly discernible, but the arresting voice, vibrant with restrained emotion, is clearly heard, whispering hope, speaking of pardon, proclaiming peace. There is no diminution of interest, no lessening of quickened emotion, as the darkness deepens. Rather are both intensified, as Dr. Meyer proceeds to unfold the nature of the true relationship between God and man:

The love Christ requires in all His followers [he says] is the love of God and man—of God, for His own sweet sake and of man, for God's. In all provocations, arising either from the weakness or malice of men, we must show ourselves a pattern of gentleness, and meekness, and be they never so oft-repeated, are not to be overcome with evil, but are to overcome evil with good. Let no man be permitted to deceive us with vain words. He who is not longsuffering, hath not love; he who is not kind, hath not love; he who envieth, hath not love; he that is proud, vain and puffed up, that man hath no love.

The conclusion of the whole matter, my brethren, is this: whatever I speak, whatever I know, whatever I believe, whatever I do, whatever I suffer, if I have not the faith that worketh by love, that produces not love to God and all mankind—I am not walking in the way which leadeth to life. Whatever eloquence I have; whatever natural or supernatural knowledge; whatever faith I have received from God; whatever works I do, whether of piety or mercy;

whatever suffering I undergo for conscience' sake, even though I resist unto blood:—all these things avail nothing before God, unless I am meek and lowly of heart, unless my soul be filled with love.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren in the Lord, that ye permit yourselves to see, that true godliness, in the very essence of it, is a matter of holy tempers. And all other forms of "godliness," no matter what name it wear, or bear, is lighter, more negligible, than egregious vanity.

Let every man here, therefore, see to it, that he secure the one thing needful. With all his eloquence, his knowledge, his faith, his works, his sufferings—let him hold fast to love. He, that through the power of love endureth to the end, is humble, faithful, patient, loving. He, and he alone, shall, through the merits of Christ Jesus, inherit the kingdom, prepared for mankind from the foundation of the world.

In a closing word, may I implore you, all, to rededicate yourselves, this night, in a spirit of consuming, abiding love. No matter what the past have in it of alien thought and character, have done with it, in this hour, and may the spirit of Christ Jesus be in you—that spirit which is Love Incarnate, which knows no barriers, and embraces all mankind.

The message is delivered, and the preacher comes to his closing word. It is a ringing challenge—a note of triumph—a glorious confession! "Tomorrow morning, long before many of you are astir, I shall be on my way to Southampton," he declares. "The King's business requireth haste, and with its urgent dispatch, I am

solemnly charged. I go, knowing full well that you will pray earnestly, as I shall pray, that I may be safely restored to you. Meanwhile—until I look into your faces again—rest you confidently, overcomingly, on this gracious, enheartening word: *‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord.’*”

The crowded congregation, suddenly released, instantly becomes susceptible of movement. The high tension is slackened, men and women look again into each other’s faces; time, which had seemed to halt—stranded on a hush—moves forward again, on its march to eternity. The ultra-exalted mood, poignant in its intensity, is succeeded by one of rarely-experienced tranquillity; over the souls of men and women the peace of God descends, as gently as dew upon the slopes of Hermon. For all of us, it has been a season of sweet, spiritual refreshing—an hour in which God had, indeed, tabernacled Himself with men. We had heard and hearkened to His voice through that of His honoured servant, and refrained not from adding praise to praise.

Lights are turned on, and the concluding hymn upwells, in a burst of hallowed song:

*The day Thou gavest Lord is ended,
The darkness falls at Thy behest;
To Thee our morning hymns ascended,
Thy praise shall hallow now our rest.*

*The sun that bids us rest, is waking
Our brethren 'neath the Western sky,
And, hour by hour, fresh lips are making
Thy wondrous doings heard on high.*

*So be it, Lord; Thy throne shall never,
Like earth's proud empires, melt away;
But stand, and rule, and grow for ever,
Till all Thy creatures own Thy sway.*

The congregation bends in solemn prayer, and under the searching words of their pastor, the hearts of his flock melt, as wax before a flame. Their spirits glow with the warmth and radiance of kindling love. Tears fall like rain—tears, which being caught up in prayer's golden crucible, are laid, therein, upon the altar of the Lord. They come up acceptable in His sight; and lo! the fire descends, and dries them all!

Once again the preacher's voice is heard—raised in the last public utterance, his brethren are to hear from him, until he come to them again; the last of which any record will be made in these pages.

"Brethren," he says quietly and with uplifted hands, "pray for me . . . that I may be restored to you the sooner. And may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do

His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'"

Every head is bowed; each heart is blest; the benison of the Lord is over all! Dr. Meyer steps down to join his brethren, who crowd about him with expressions of love and gratitude, wishing him Godspeed upon his journey and a regretful, yet fond farewell. Wending our way homeward in the friendly darkness, we converse, one with the other, concerning the great verities of the Gospel—of the gracious experience which had been ours that day. Seldom, if ever, had God seemed so strangely, so blessedly near. So susceptible had we become to things divine; so alert to "the music of the spheres;" so aware of the nearness and reality of things eternal, that it seemed as though the very atmosphere about us were made electric with the power and presence of the Highest; the firmament above us charged with choicest benediction, and God's glory breaking, in shafts of lambent beauty, from the placid bosom of the stars. The glamour of that gracious hour once more descends upon me. I see again, in the dim interior of the great church, the slender figure of that fearless leader, faithful witness, brother-man, and ere the mood pass—perchance for ever—I lean across the intervening, war-scarred years, and take his hand.

NOTABLE DAYS IN THE LIFE OF DR. F. B. MEYER

- 1847: Born in London, April 8.
- 1856: Removed with parents to Brighton, Sussex, and entered Brighton College.
- 1862: Returned to London, and completed his early education in that city.
- 1864: Entered the counting-house of Allan Murray, Tea-Merchants, Billiter Square, London.
- 1866: Decided to become a preacher, delivered his "trial" sermon in Seven Dials Chapel, and entered Regent's Park College, to prepare for the Gospel ministry.
- 1868: Assumed charge of Duke Street Baptist Chapel, Richmond, Surrey.
- 1869: Completed College Course, graduated B.A. (London University), and appointed Assistant Minister to Rev. Charles M. Birrell, Pembroke Baptist Chapel, Liverpool.
- 1871: Married to Miss J. E. Jones, of Birkenhead, Cheshire, February 20.
- 1872: Received, and accepted, call to pastorate of Priors Street Baptist Chapel, York.
- 1873: Invited Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey to his Chapel, and here the American evangelists' wonderful Mission in Great Britain, virtually began, July 2.
- 1874: Invited to succeed Dr. Haycroft in the pastorate of Victoria Road Baptist Church, Leicester, and proceeded thither.
- 1878: Resigned from Victoria Road Church, to engage in a wider ministry among the masses. Engaged Museum Building for the purpose and there conducted "popular" services, May 2.

- 1880-1: Foundation stones of Memorial Hall, Leicester, laid, July 1, 1880, the opening services of the new church being held, July 2, 1881. Began a notable ministry, which included work among the unemployed, discharged prisoners, and other forms of Christian philanthropy.
- 1887: Mrs. Meyer's health becoming impaired by the clayey soil of Leicester, a change of location deemed advisable. After a three-week vacation in Algeria, Dr. Meyer decided to accept pastorate of Regent's Park Chapel, London, Christmas, 1887.
- 1888: Entered on ministry at Regent's Park, and there continued four years.
- 1889: Visited India and Burma.
- 1891: On the invitation of D. L. Moody, paid his first visit to America, to address meetings at East Northfield Summer Conference. F. B. Meyer continued to make periodical preaching trips to the New World, during the rest of his life, making, in all, twelve journeys to America. His last visit was in 1927, and he was scheduled to repeat in 1929, but death intervened.
- 1892: Called to Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, on the retirement of Dr. Newman Hall, and entered on his Lambeth pastorate, October 2, thus beginning another great ministry which lasted fifteen years.
- 1901: Visited Damascus, Beyrut, and other parts of Asia Minor.
- 1902: Conducted a series of Conferences in Russia.
- 1904: Elected President, National Free Church Council, and conducted a notable year of meetings in all parts of England. Took active share in protest against Educational Bill and Chinese Labour.
- 1906: Elected President of the Baptist Union, and carried through another strenuous year's work.

- 1907: Resigned pastorate of Christ Church, and went off on a world tour.
- 1909: Received, and accepted, invitation to Regent's Park Chapel for a second pastorate.
- 1915: Entered on second pastorate at Christ Church.
- 1917: Sustained leading share in founding Advent Testimony Movement.
- 1920: Resigned pastorate of Christ Church, and became minister-emeritus. Elected President of National Free Church, for a second time. Also undertook Secretaryship of Council, after the death of Thomas Law.
- 1921-8: Engaged in continual itinerancies in England, Australia, Canada and the United States.
- 1929: Death of Mrs. Meyer, in January of this year. Preached last sermon in Wesley Chapel, City Road, London, February 10; entered Nursing Home, February 13; removed to Boscombe, March 15; became rapidly worse in health, and died March 28. Funeral services in Christ Church, and interment at Boscombe Cemetery, April 3. Memorial service in Christ Church, April 7.

SOME BOOKS AND BOOKLETS BY F. B. MEYER

Autobiographical

The Bells of Is: Voices of Human Need.
Reveries and Realities: Personal Reminiscences.

Old Testament Heroes

Abraham: The Obedience of Faith.
David: Shepherd, Psalmist, King.
Elijah! and the Secret of His Power.
Israel, a Prince with God.
Joseph: Beloved, Hated, Exalted.
Joshua and the Land of Promise.
Jeremiah: Priest and Prophet.
Moses, the Servant of God.
Samuel the Prophet.
Zechariah: the Prophet of Hope.

New Testament Heroes

John the Baptist.
Paul: A Servant of Jesus Christ.
Peter: Fisherman, Disciple, Apostle.

Biblical Exposition

Christ in Isaiah: Expositions of Chaps. XL-LV.
The Way into the Holiest: Exposition of Hebrews.
The Light and Life of Men: Exposition of John I-XII.
Love to the Uttermost: Exposition of John XIII-XXI.
Tried by Fire: Exposition of First Peter.
The Directory of the Devout Life: Commentary on
The Sermon on the Mount.
The Psalms: Notes and Readings.
The Shepherd Psalm: Commentary on Psalm XXIII.

Meditation and Devotion

Work-a-Day Sermons.
Religion in Homespun.
Hints to Lay Preachers.
Saved and Kept: Counsels to Young Believers.
Peace, Perfect Peace; A Book for the Sorrowing.
Back to Bethel: Fellowship with God.
Meet for the Master's Use.
The Secret of Guidance.
Light on Life's Duties.
The Secret of Guidance.
Christian Living.
The Present Tenses of the Blessed Life.
The Future Tenses of the Blessed Life.
Christian Living.
Key-Words of the Inner Life.
The Glorious Lord.
Through Fire and Flood.
Calvary to Pentecost.
Our Daily Homily: Genesis to Revelation.
Cheer for Life's Pilgrimage.
Prayers for Heart and Home.
My Daily Prayer.
"Blessed Are Ye."
The Call and Challenge of the Unseen.
Pamphlets, etc.

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